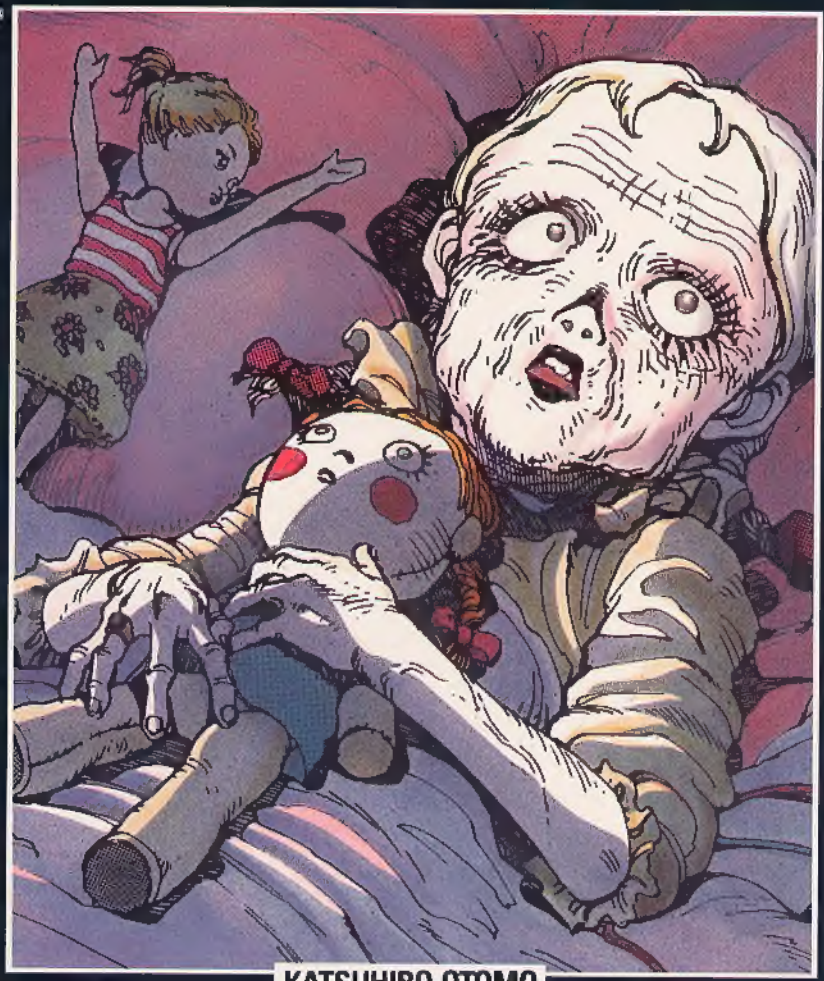
AKIRA 7

EPIC COMICS • $3.50 • $4.75 CAN • VOL. 1, NO. 7



KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Published monthly by EPIC COMICS
In collaboration with Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo
Office of Publication:
387 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10016

AKIRA™ Vol. 1, No. 7
Copyright © 1989 MASH · ROOM Co., Ltd.
All rights reserved.
First published in Japan in 1984
by Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo.
No part of this book may be printed
or reproduced in any manner
whatsoever, whether mechanical or
electronic, without the
written permission of the author
and publisher. The stories,
characters, and incidents in this
publication are entirely
fictional. All characters appearing
in this book and their
distinctive likenesses are trademarks
of MASH · ROOM Co., Ltd.
Distributed in Japan
by Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo.

English language translation is copyright
© 1989 MASH · ROOM Co., Ltd. and
Kodansha Ltd., Tokyo. All rights reserved.

"Epic Comics" is a registered trademark
of EPIC COMICS.

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

The year is 2030. The world is rebuilding from World War III. In **Neo-Tokyo,** plans are being made to hold the next Olympics in the "old city"—where, thirty-eight years before, the first of the bombs fell.

Kaneda and his friends, teenage delinquents, make an unauthorized motorcycle run into the old city to check out the old site. They encounter a terrified child, known only as **Number 26,** possessing extraordinary telekinetic abilities. During the encounter, the paranormal boy gravely injures **Tetsuo,** one of Kaneda's close friends. Then, he vanishes.

The next night, at **Harukiya,** a tough local dive, **Kaneda** attempts, unsuccessfully, to pick up a newcomer, **Kay.** In fact, she and her companion, **Ryu,** are part of an underground resistance group dedicated to learning what is happening in the old city and putting a stop to it.

Trouble ensues, and both delinquents and resistance fighters again encounter **Number 26. Ryu** attempts to reassure the paranormal boy, but **Kaneda** is anxious to punish him for injuring **Tetsuo.** As they argue, the mysterious soldiers pursuing **Number 26** reach the scene, and a firefight results.

Then the ominous **Colonel** in charge of the covert operation appears with a secret weapon—**Number 27,** a crippled paranormal child named **Masaru. Masaru** astonishes the resistance fighters by addressing **Number 26** as **Takashi. Kay** and **Ryu** had previously assumed that **Number 26** was the Colonel's ultimate weapon—the as-yet unseen paranormal giant code-named **Akira.**

Kaneda provokes a crisis by pretending to threaten **Takashi,** who is exhibiting symptoms of drug withdrawal. **Takashi** responds with telekinetic upheavals. **Kaneda** is again separated from the resistance fighters, but he manages to intercept and hide a pill meant for **Takashi,** who is recaptured by the Colonel's men.

The next day, **Tetsuo**—who following his accident was taken to a hospital by soldiers—reappears in school, seemingly

all right. However, during Tetsuo's treatment, the **Colonel** has learned that the delinquent has great psychic potential.

Kaneda has a girlfriend in the school infirmary analyze the drug intended for **Takashi.** It is similar in substance to pills **Kaneda** and his friends take, but unbelievably concentrated and powerful.

Determined not to let a new human weapon escape him, the **Colonel** goes to the school and collects **Tetsuo.** Under the treatments of the Colonel's chief medical officer, **Tetsuo** exhibits powerful psychic abilities...and undergoes great pain.

Meanwhile, **Kaneda,** trying to spy on the **Colonel** and learn what is happening to **Tetsuo,** re-encounters the members of the resistance, and is brought back to their headquarters. Questioned by **Ryu,** he denies all knowledge of the stolen drug.

Kiyoko, another of the psychic children under the Colonel's control, announces to her master the disastrous news that **Akira**—who is asleep, and expected to remain so for some time—will awaken in the near future. Meanwhile, at the resistance hideout, **Kaneda** encounters a ghost-like apparition of himself, shouting Akira's name.

When soldiers enter the resistance hideout in force, **Kaneda** and **Kay** manage together to escape to **Harukiya,** where the bartender agrees to shelter them.

Overwhelmed by pain, **Tetsuo** breaks out of the Colonel's installation, using his burgeoning powers to slaughter all who oppose him. **Tetsuo** takes control of the **Clowns**—a vicious motorcycle gang who are rivals to **Kaneda** and his friends—letting them live in return for the massive amounts of drugs required to stave off his agony.

Ryu meets with **Nezu,** a resistance leader, and they share new evidence on the scale of the **Akira** project.

A spy from the Colonel's organization learns of the **Harukiya** hideout, but he is caught and left for dead by a resistance fighter.

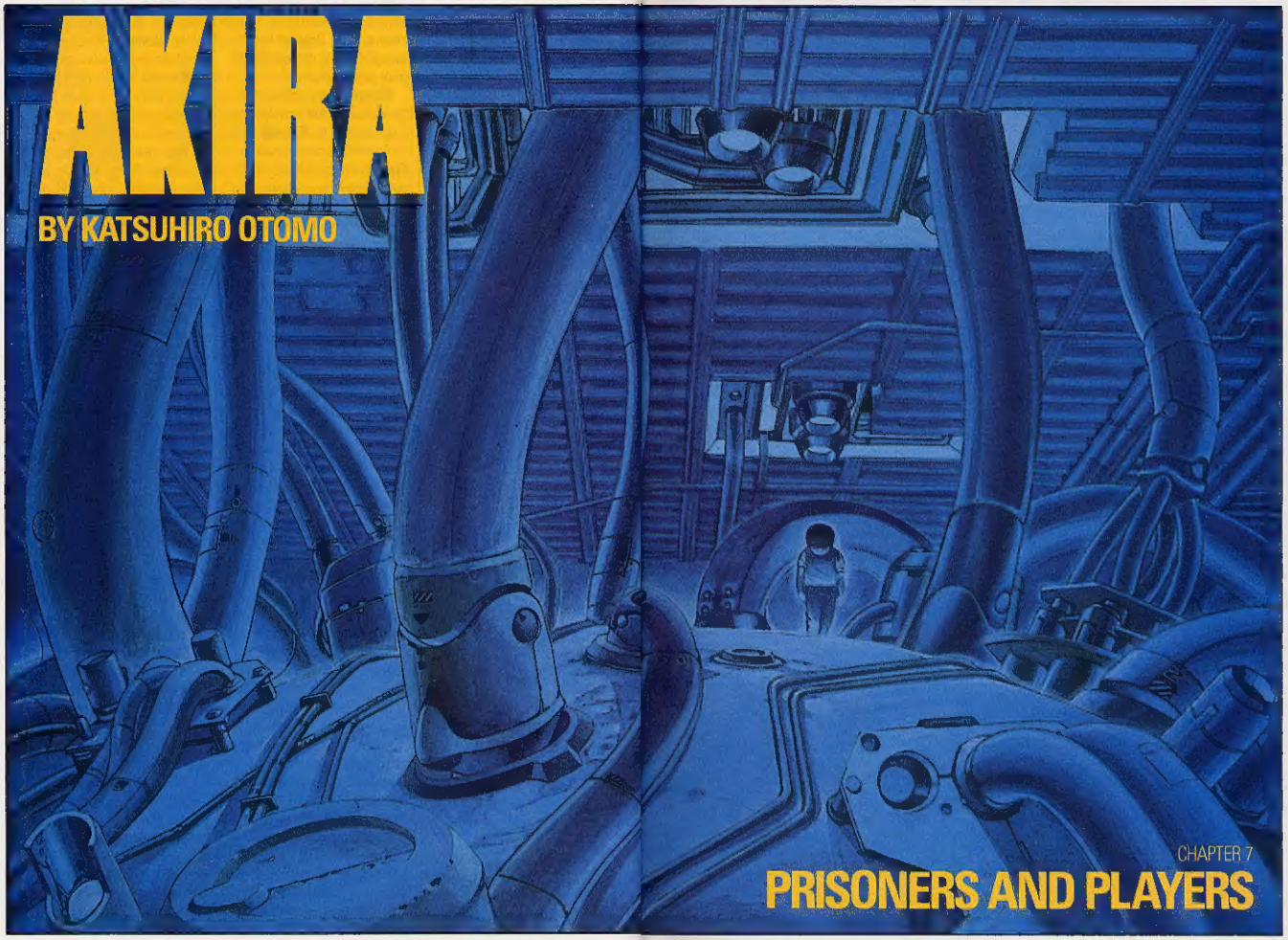
Yamagata and Kaneda's other friends come to **Harukiya. Kaneda** is amazed at the stories they tell, of Tetsuo's new powers and of his bloodthirstiness. He and **Yamagata** lead all of the local street gangs on a massive, all-out attack to stop **Tetsuo** and the **Clowns.** Shortly after they leave, the Colonel, alerted by his informant, arrives at **Harukiya** and forces the bartender to tell him where the fugitives have gone.

Yamagata and his team corner **Tetsuo** in a warehouse. Most of the gang dies, and **Yamagata** tries to shoot **Tetsuo. Kaneda** reaches the scene in time to see **Tetsuo** brutally kill **Yamagata.** Enraged, **Kaneda** does shoot **Tetsuo**...who survives the deadly wound. As they fight, **Tetsuo** grabs the drug **Kaneda** had hidden.

When the **Colonel** arrives, **Tetsuo** swallows the drug, apparently dying of an overdose. A few minutes later, the terrible delinquent recovers, more powerful than ever, and the elated **Colonel** rechristens him **Number 41.**

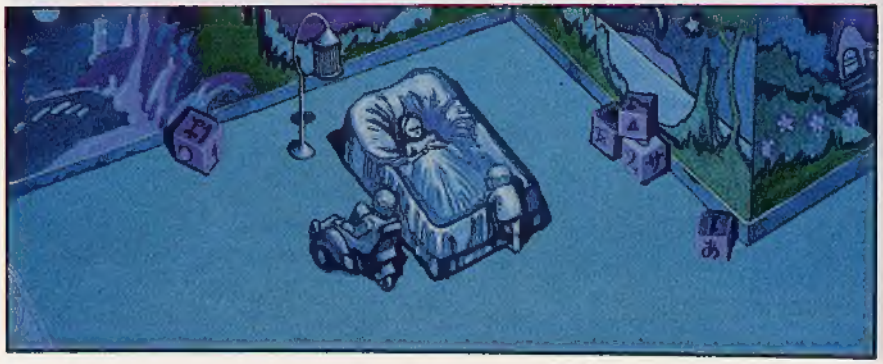
AKIRA

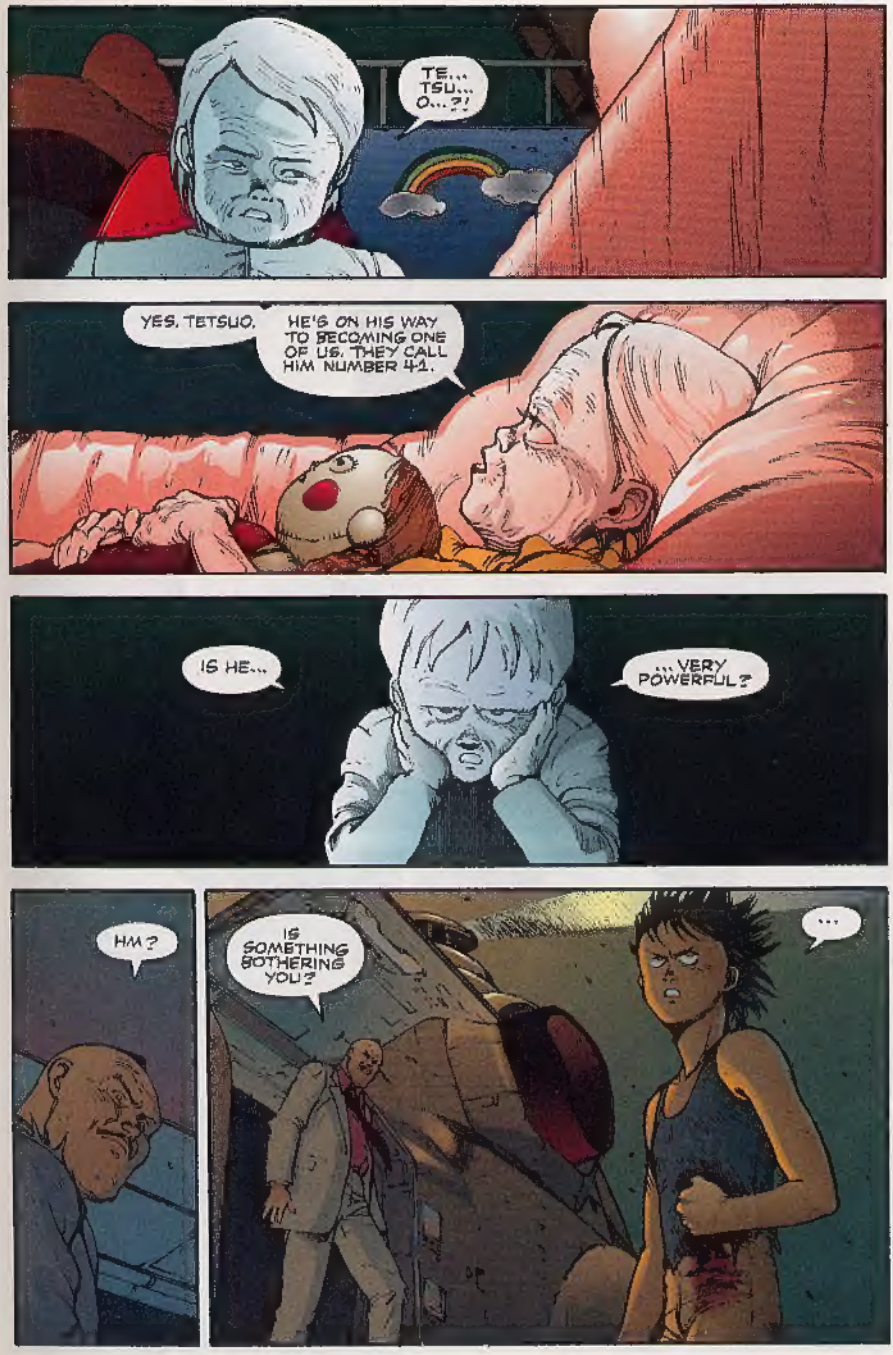
BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

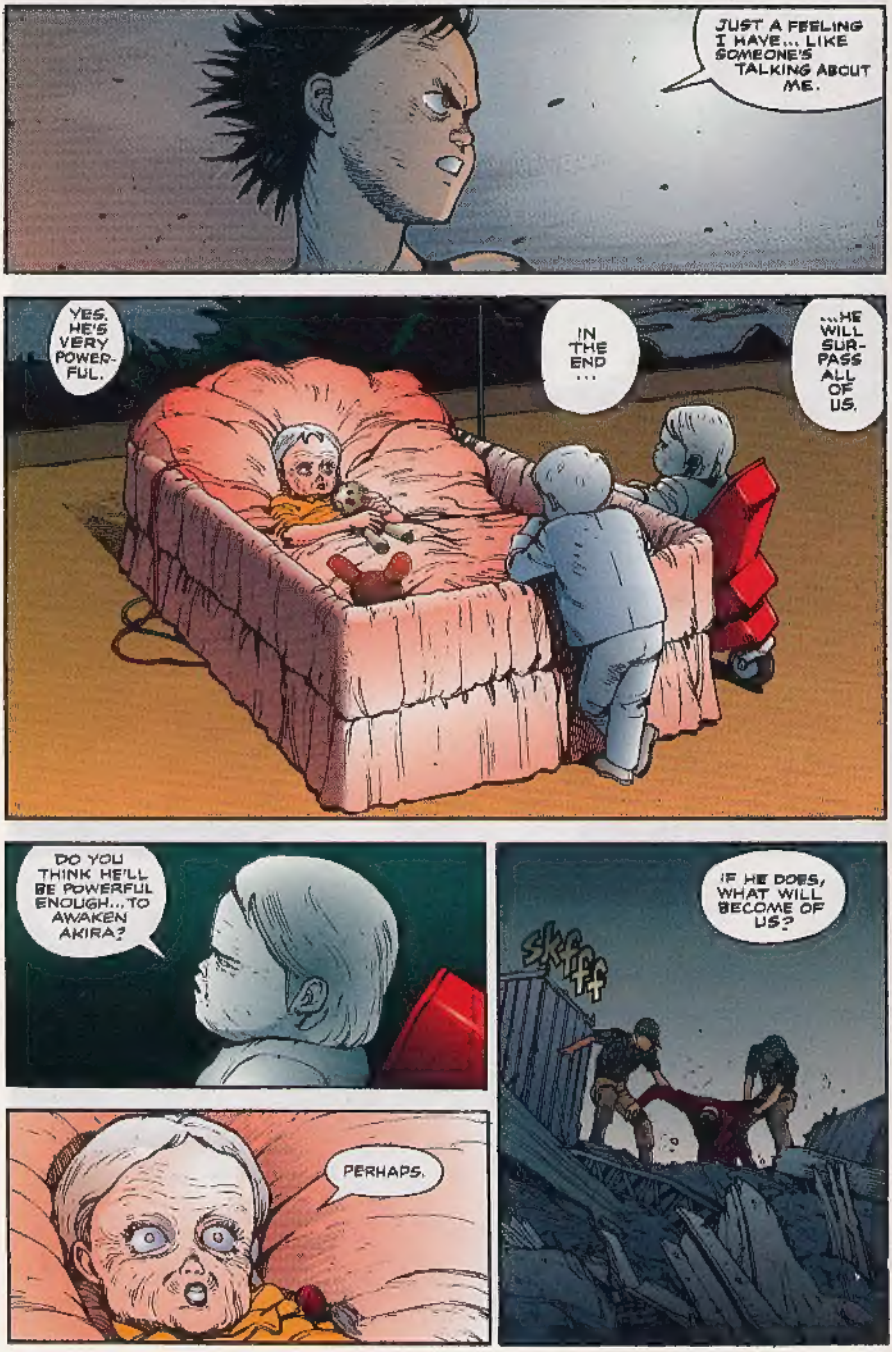


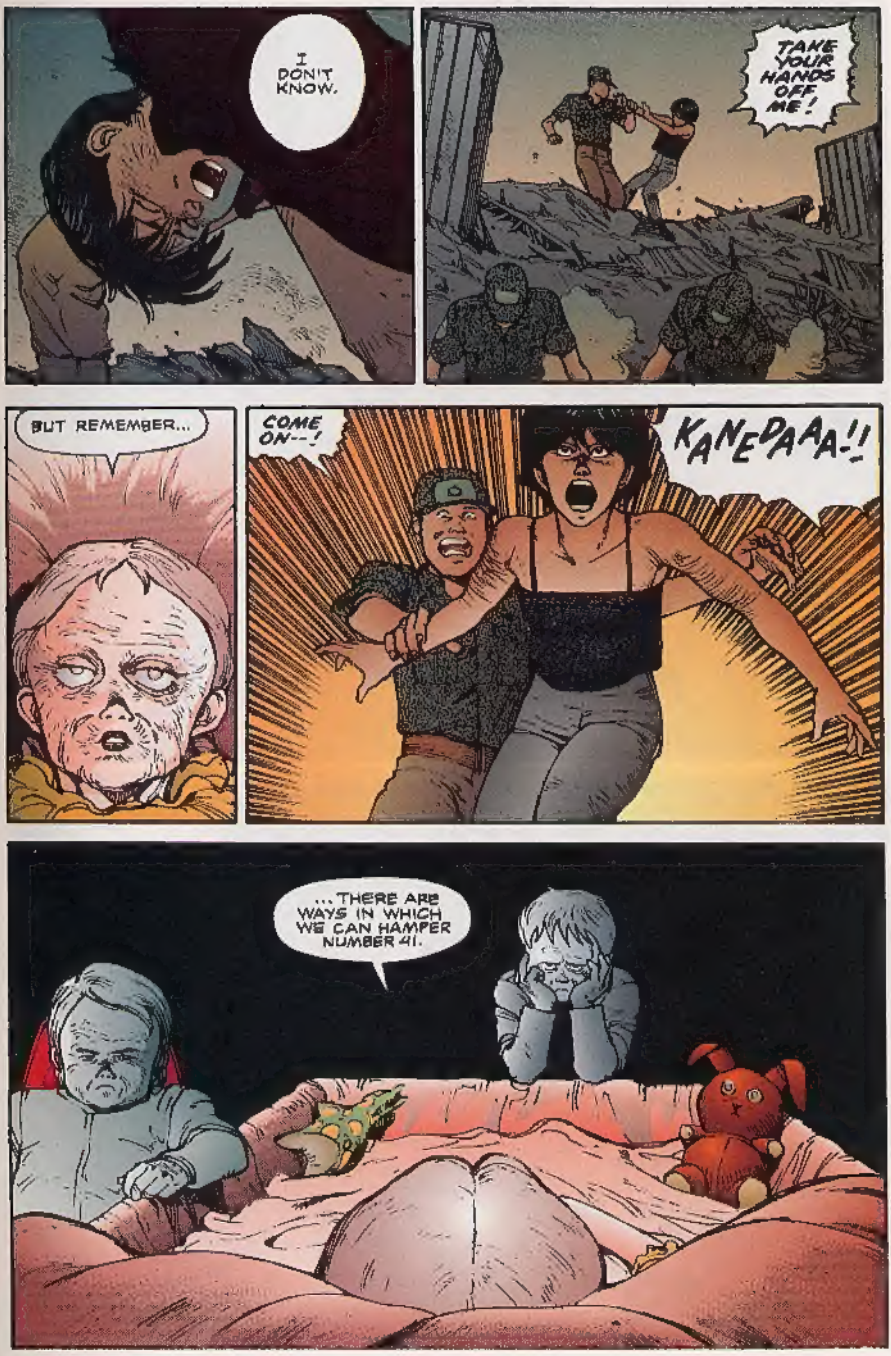
CHAPTER 7

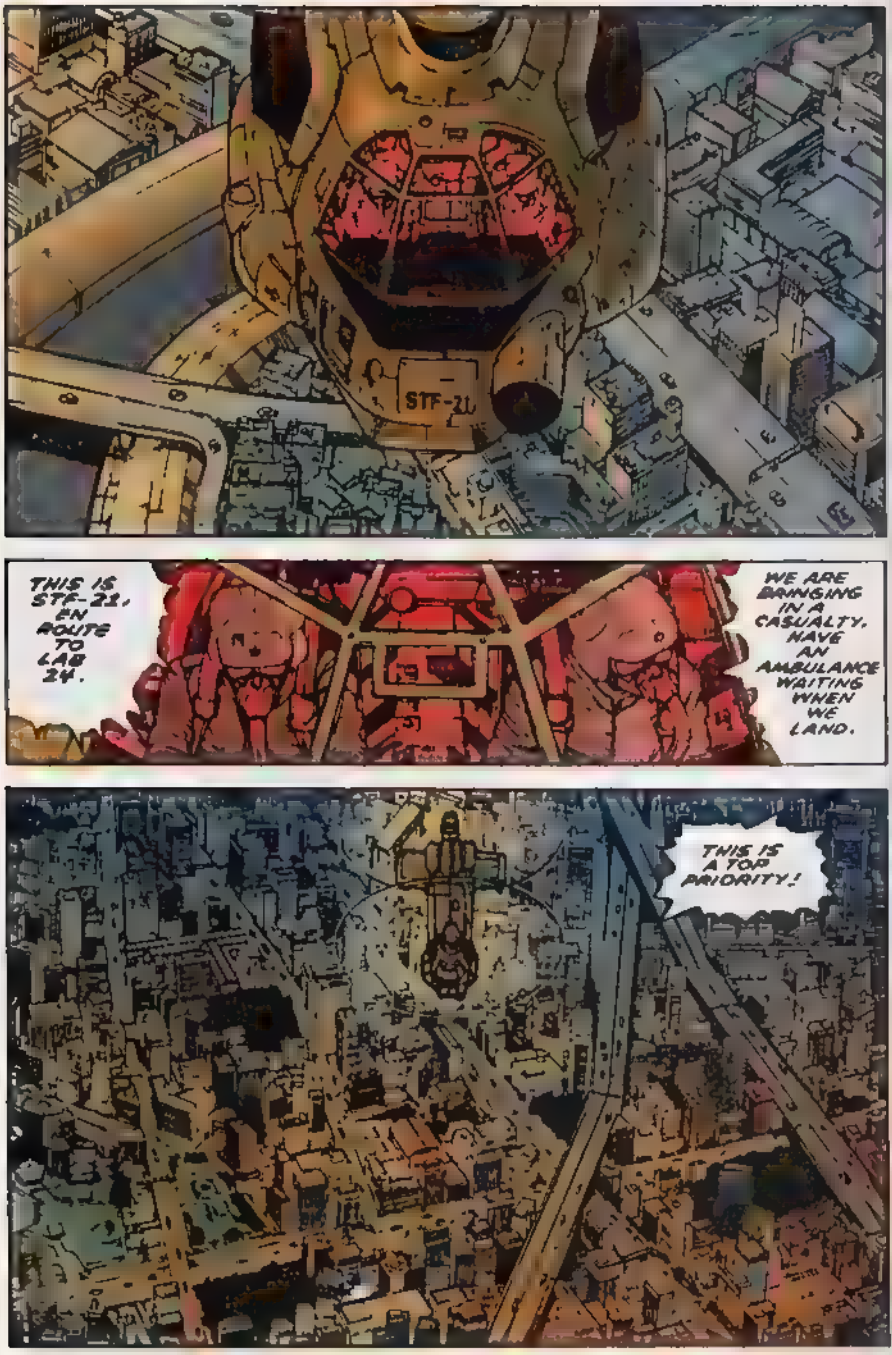
PRISONERS AND PLAYERS

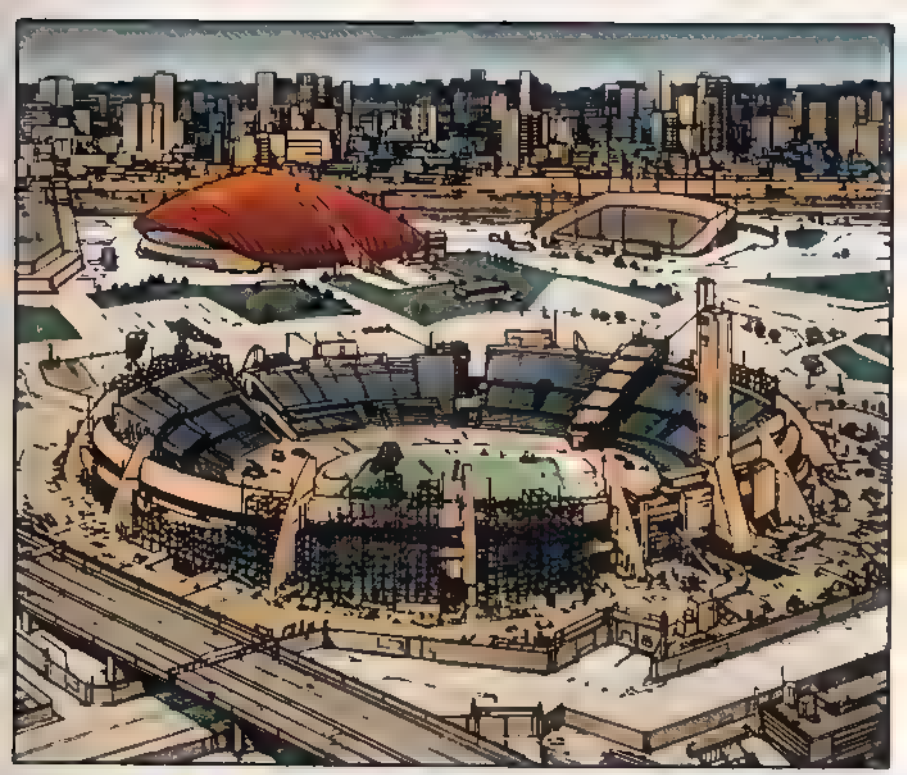


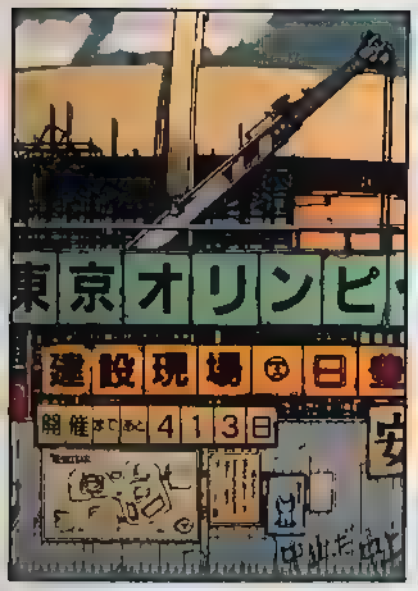

TE... TSU... O...?!
YES, TETSUO.
HE'S ON HIS WAY TO BECOMING ONE OF US. THEY CALL HIM NUMBER 41.
IS HE...
...VERY POWERFUL?
HM?
IS SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU?
...


JUST A FEELING I HAVE... LIKE SOMEONE'S TALKING ABOUT ME.
YES. HE'S VERY POWERFUL.
IN THE END ...
...HE WILL SURPASS ALL OF US.
DO YOU THINK HE'LL BE POWERFUL ENOUGH...TO AWAKEN AKIRA?
IF HE DOES, WHAT WILL BECOME OF US?
SKKTTT
PERHAPS.


I DON'T KNOW.
TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME!
BUT REMEMBER...
COME ON--!
KANEDAAA-!!
...THERE ARE WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN HAMPER NUMBER 41.

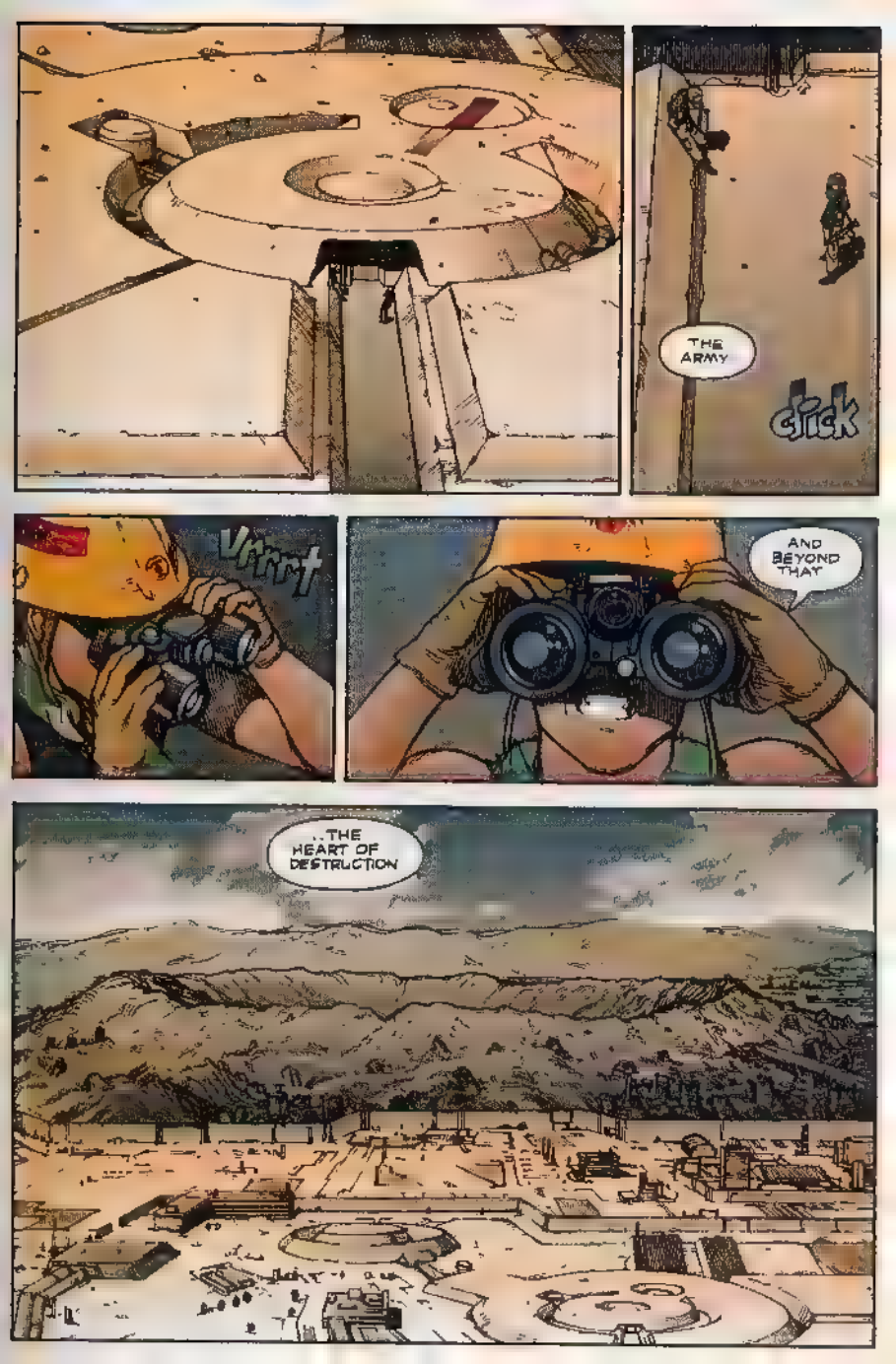

STF-21
THIS IS STF-21, EN ROUTE TO LAB 24.
WE ARE BRINGING IN A CASUALTY. HAVE AN AMBULANCE WAITING WHEN WE LAND.
THIS IS A TOP PRIORITY!

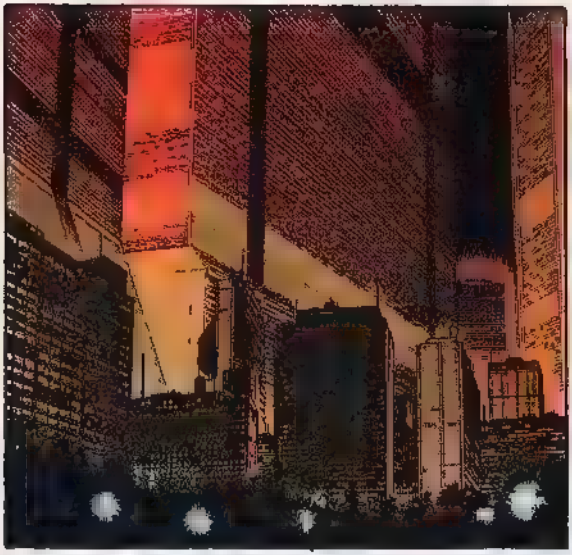


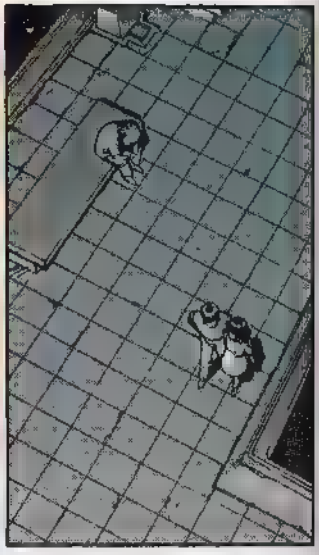

東京オリンピ
建設現場
開催まであと 4 1 3 日

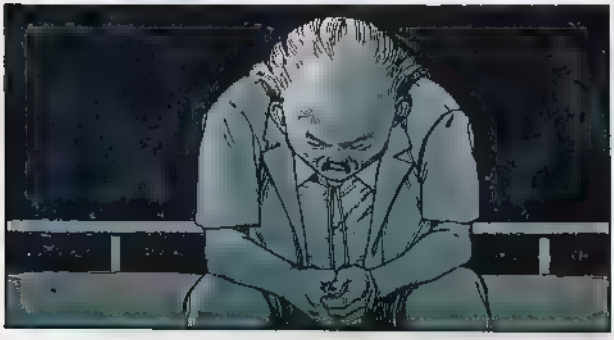
KLANK
KLANK
KLANK
CLANK

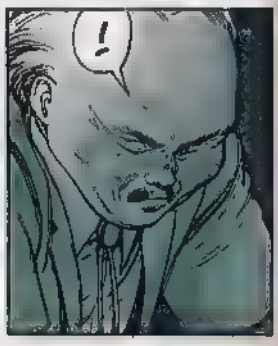
GNG
GNG
KRANK
KR
PRRRR
REEEE
DA
DA
DA
DA
...
A HELIPORT


THE ARMY
Grick
Vrrrt
AND BEYOND THAT
...THE HEART OF DESTRUCTION



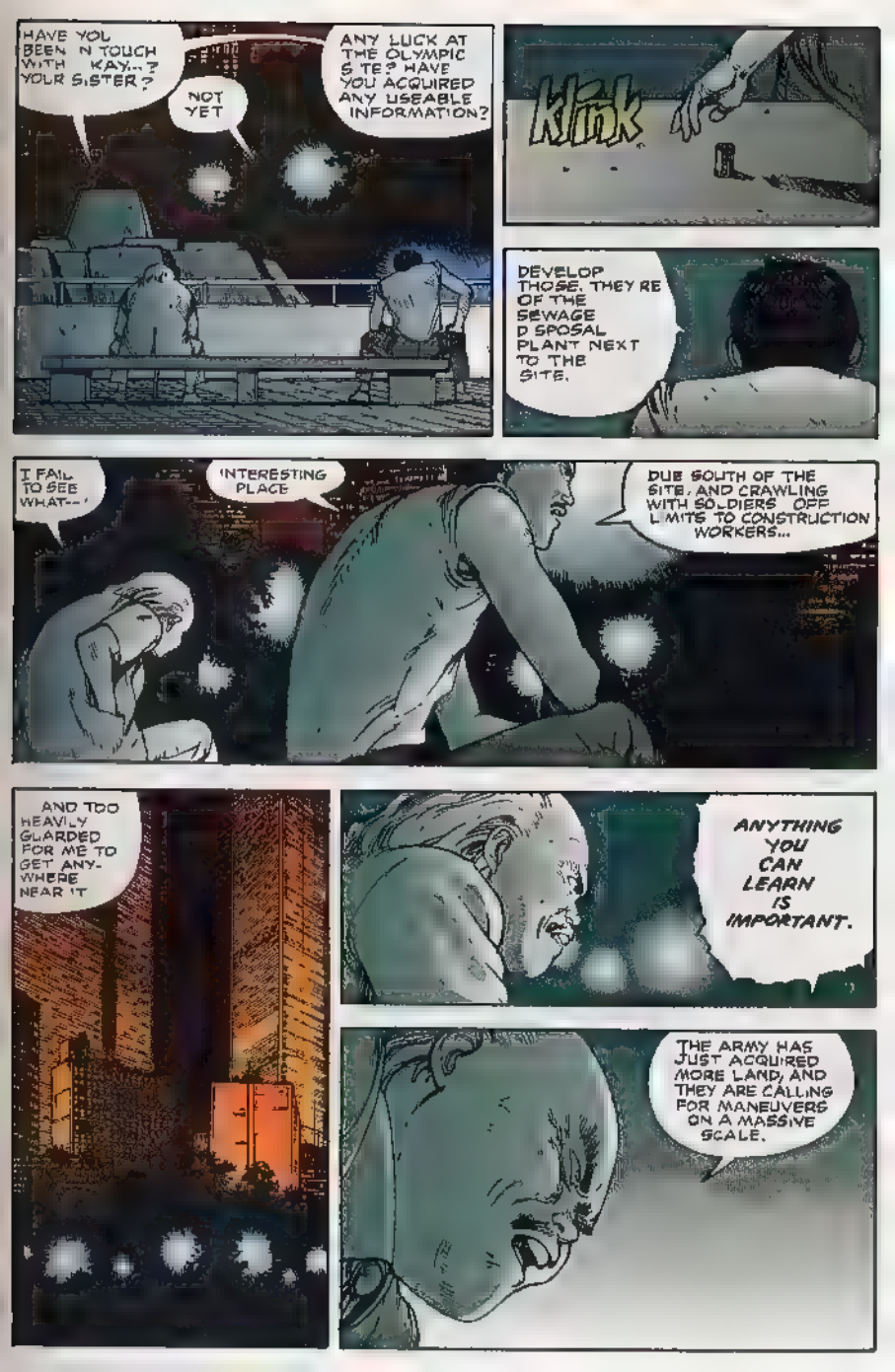


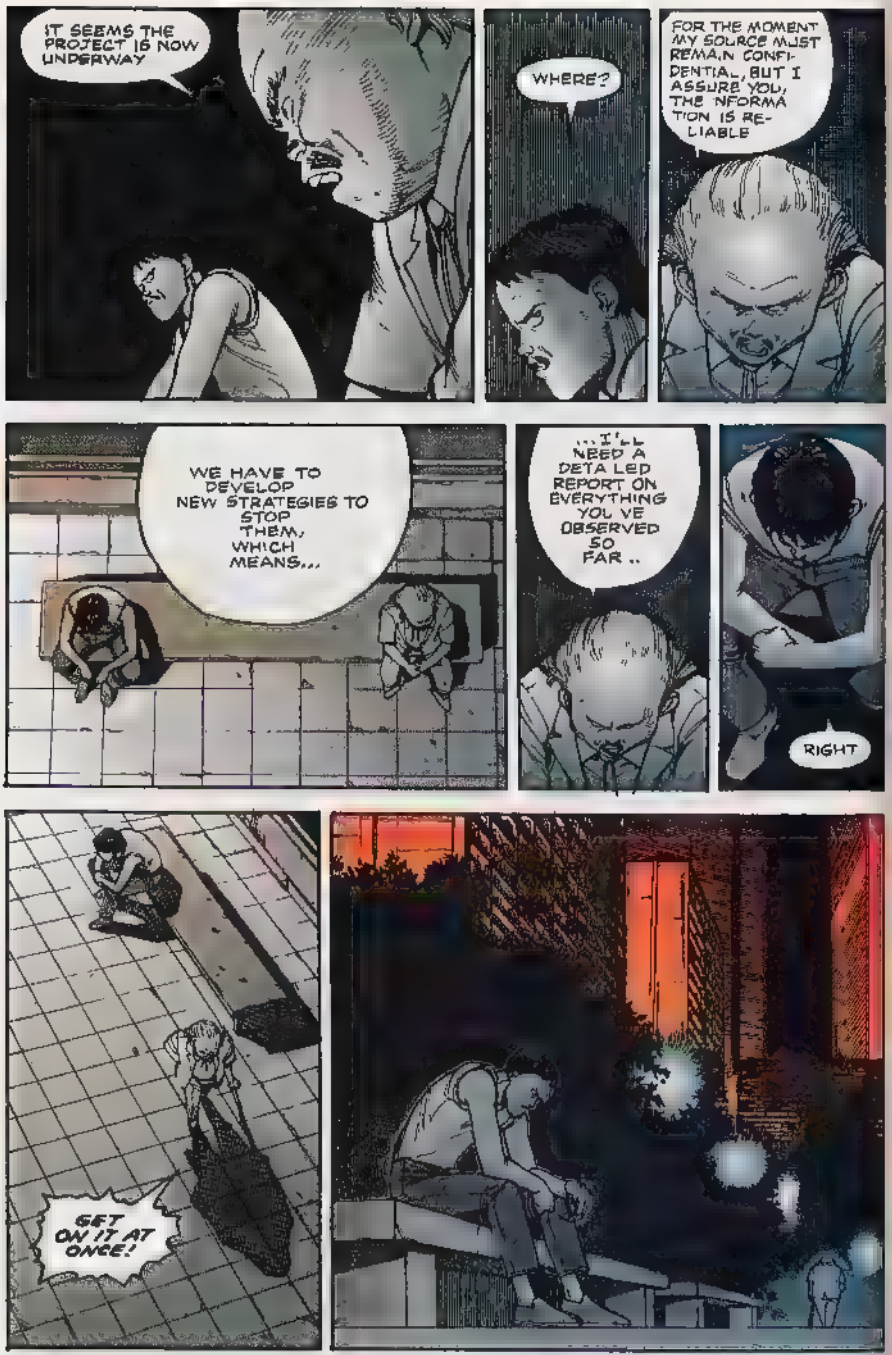


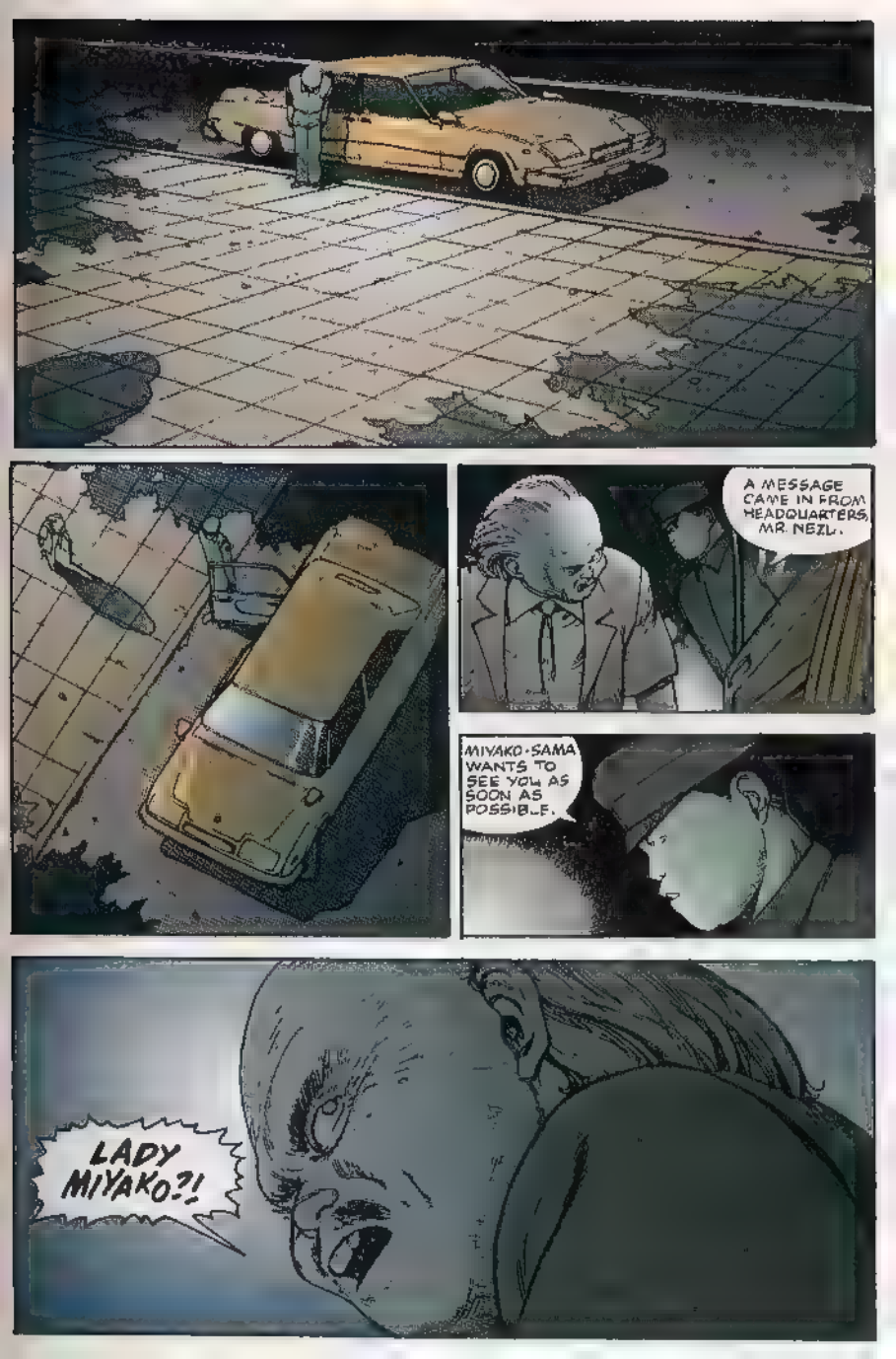

!

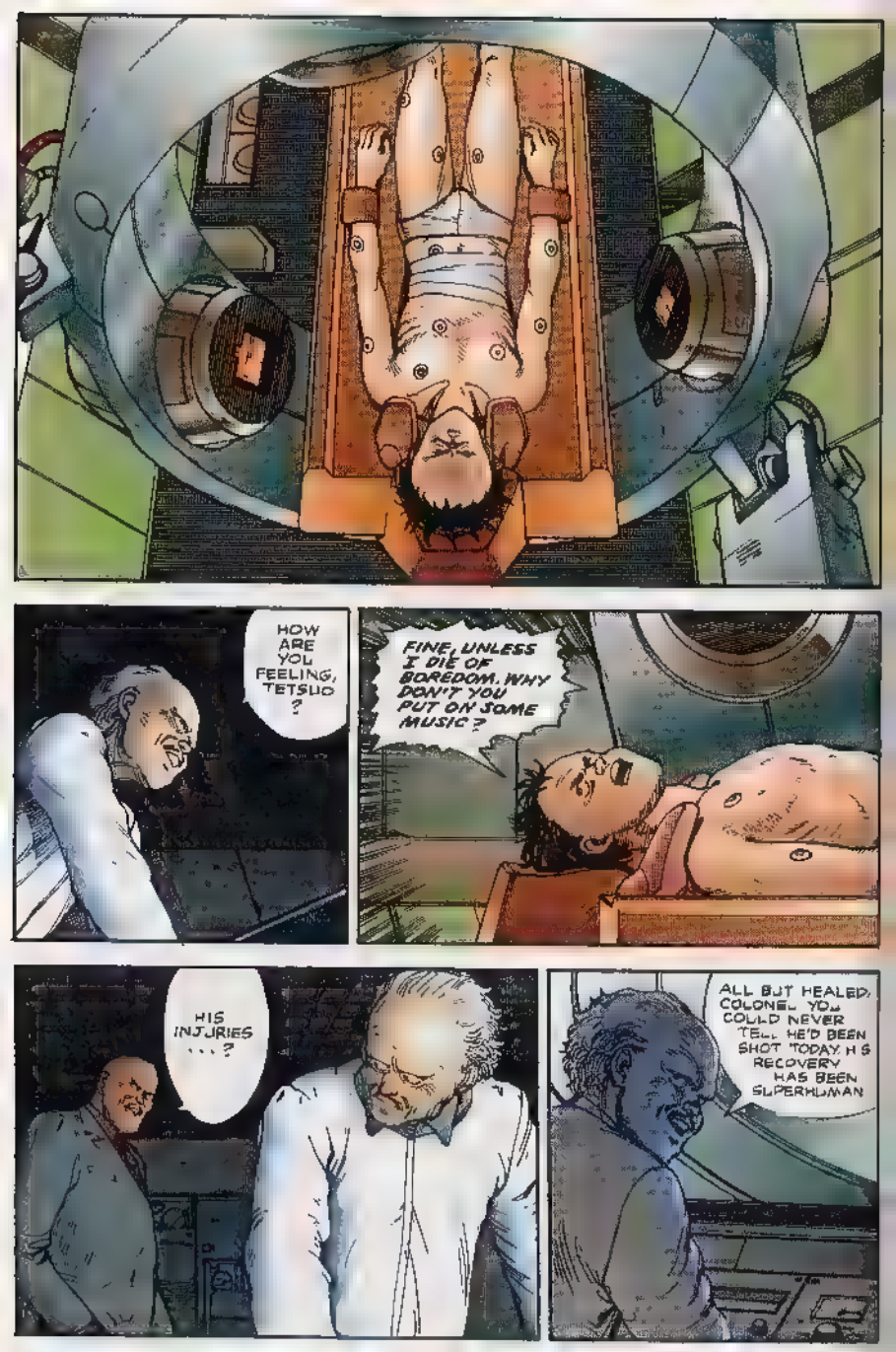
thuf

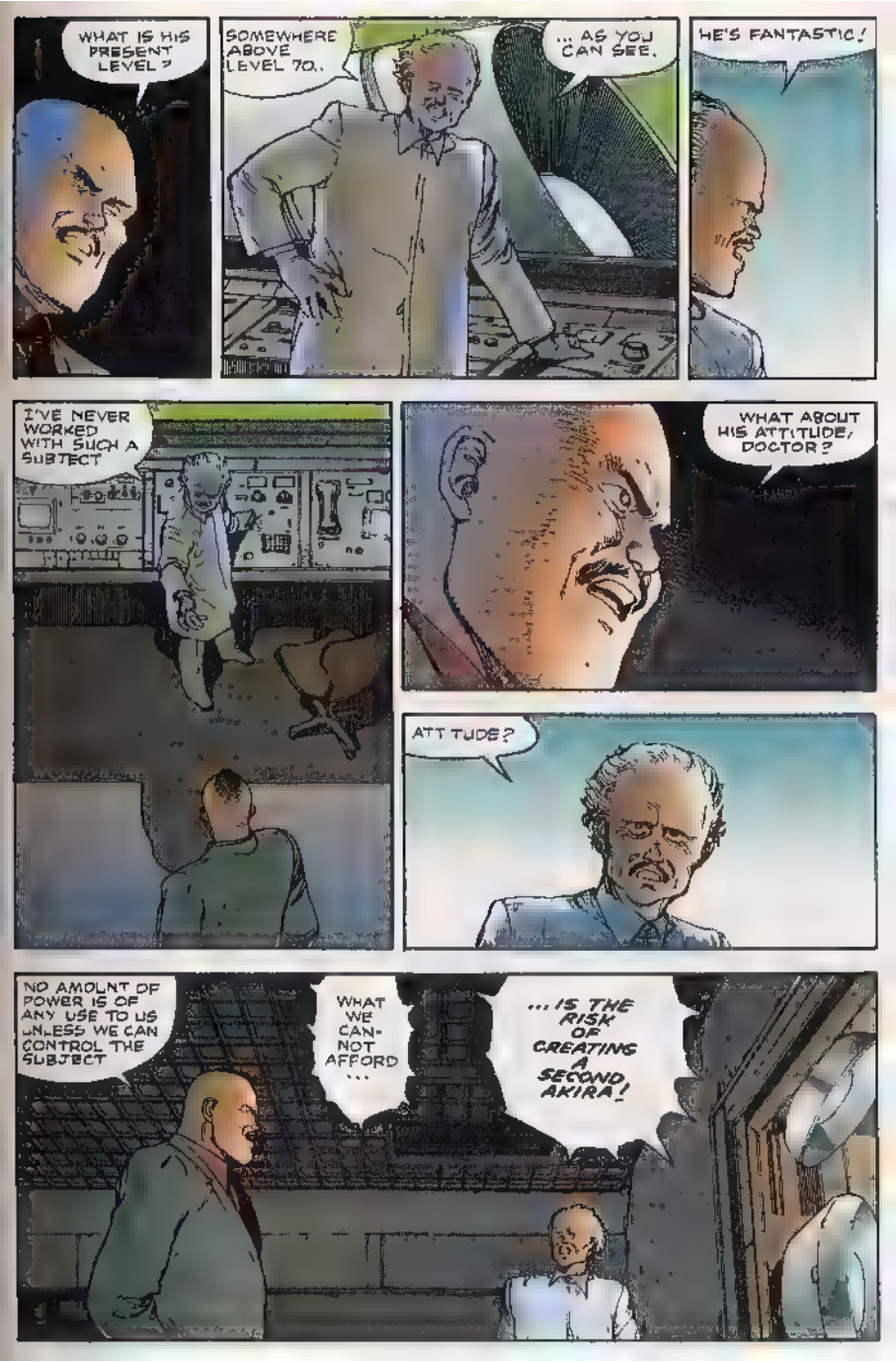
YOU'RE GETTING A NICE TAN, WORKING IN THE SUN ALL DAY, RYU.


HAVE YOU BEEN IN TOUCH WITH KAY...? YOUR SISTER?
NOT YET
ANY LUCK AT THE OLYMPIC S TE? HAVE YOU ACQUIRED ANY USEABLE INFORMATION?
Klink
DEVELOP THOSE. THEY RE OF THE SEWAGE D SPOSAL PLANT NEXT TO THE SITE.
I FAIL TO SEE WHAT--'
'INTERESTING PLACE
DUB SOUTH OF THE SITE, AND CRAWLING WITH SOLDIERS OFF L MITS TO CONSTRUCTION WORKERS...
AND TOO HEAVILY GUARDED FOR ME TO GET ANY- WHERE NEAR 'T
ANYTHING YOU CAN LEARN IS IMPORTANT.
THE ARMY HAS JUST ACQUIRED MORE LAND, AND THEY ARE CALLING FOR MANEUVERS ON A MASSIVE SCALE.


IT SEEMS THE PROJECT IS NOW UNDERWAY
WHERE?
FOR THE MOMENT MY SOURCE MUST REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL, BUT I ASSURE YOU, THE INFORMATION IS RELIABLE
WE HAVE TO DEVELOP NEW STRATEGIES TO STOP THEM, WHICH MEANS...
...I'LL NEED A DETAILED REPORT ON EVERYTHING YOU'VE OBSERVED SO FAR..
RIGHT
GET ON IT AT ONCE!

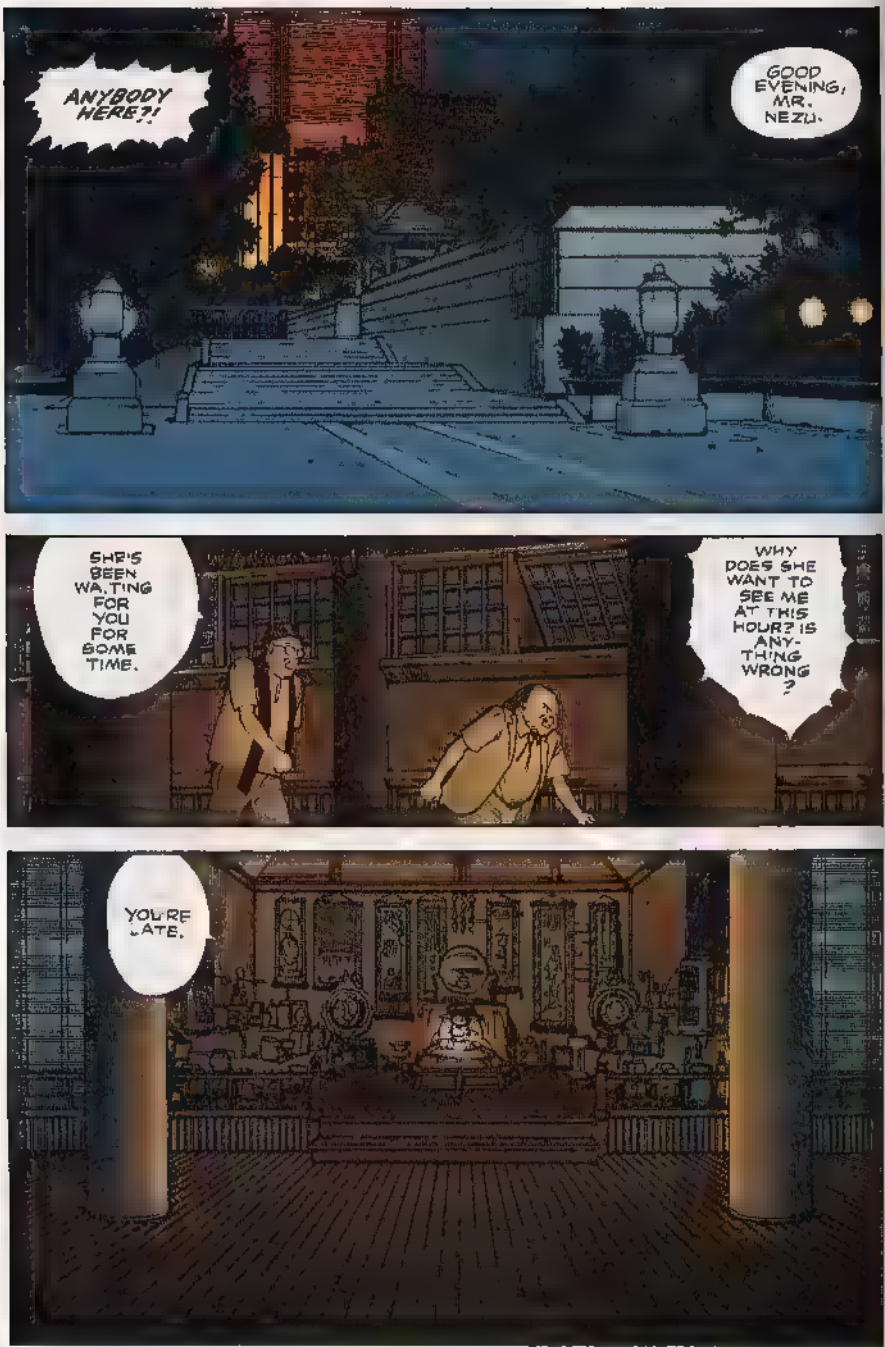

A MESSAGE CAME IN FROM HEADQUARTERS, MR. NEZU.
MIYAKO-SAMA WANTS TO SEE YOU AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
LADY MIYAKO?!


HOW ARE YOU FEELING, TETSUO ?
FINE, UNLESS I DIE OF BOREDOM. WHY DON'T YOU PUT ON SOME MUSIC ?
HIS INJURIES . . . ?
ALL BUT HEALED, COLONEL. YOU COULD NEVER TELL HE'D BEEN SHOT TODAY. H S RECOVERY HAS BEEN SUPERHUMAN


WHAT IS HIS PRESENT LEVEL?
SOMEWHERE ABOVE LEVEL 70..
... AS YOU CAN SEE.
HE'S FANTASTIC!
I'VE NEVER WORKED WITH SUCH A SUBJECT
WHAT ABOUT HIS ATTITUDE, DOCTOR?
ATTITUDE?
NO AMOUNT OF POWER IS OF ANY USE TO US UNLESS WE CAN CONTROL THE SUBJECT
WHAT WE CAN-NOT AFFORD ...
... IS THE RISK OF CREATING A SECOND AKIRA!

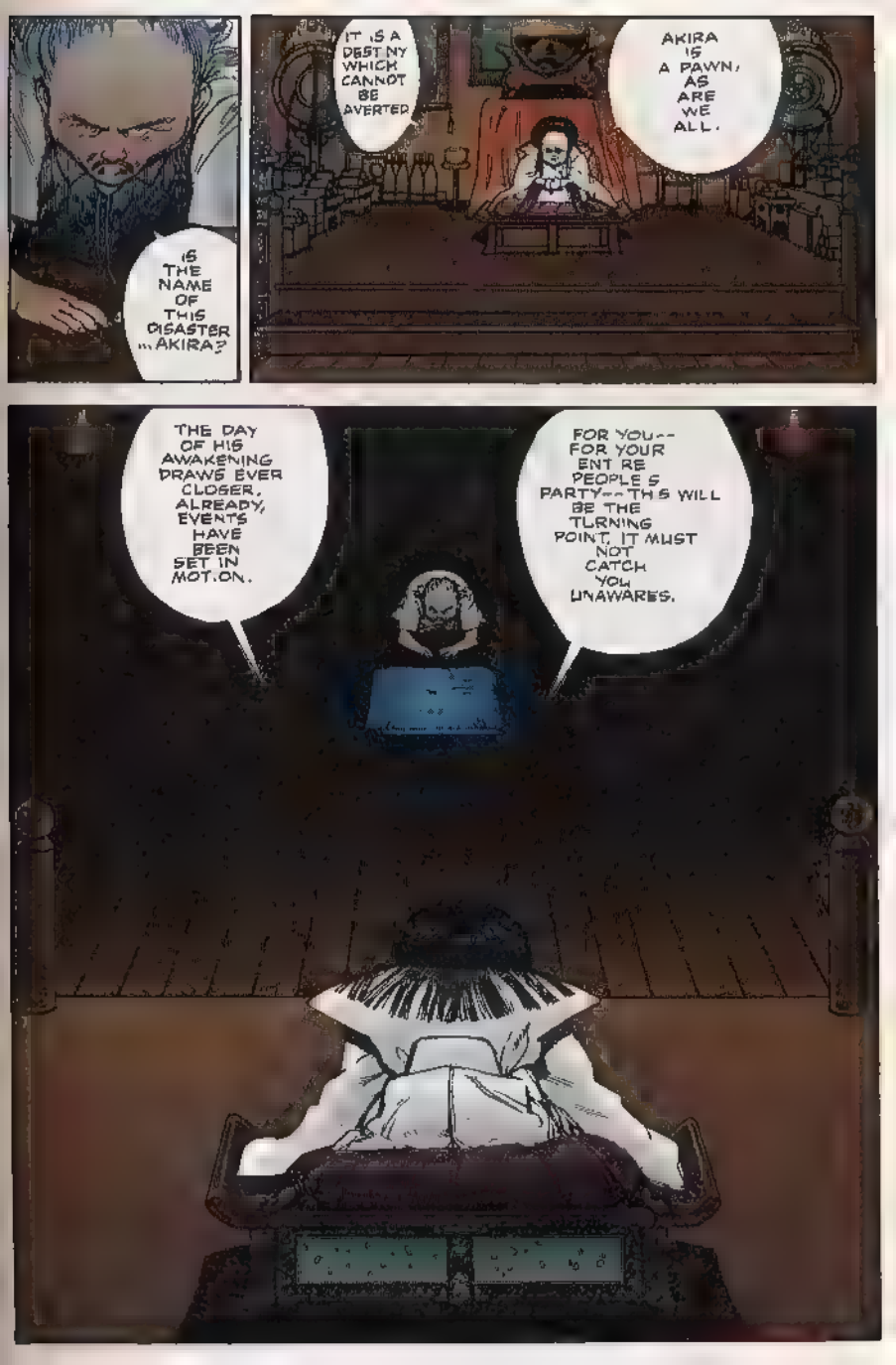
ANOTHER AK'RA ?

WOK
...RATS...
COME ON, YOU GUYS...
LEMME OUTTA HEEEERE!


ANYBODY HERE?!
GOOD EVENING, MR. NEZU.
SHE'S BEEN WAITING FOR YOU FOR SOME TIME.
WHY DOES SHE WANT TO SEE ME AT THIS HOUR? IS ANYTHING WRONG?
YOU'RE LATE.

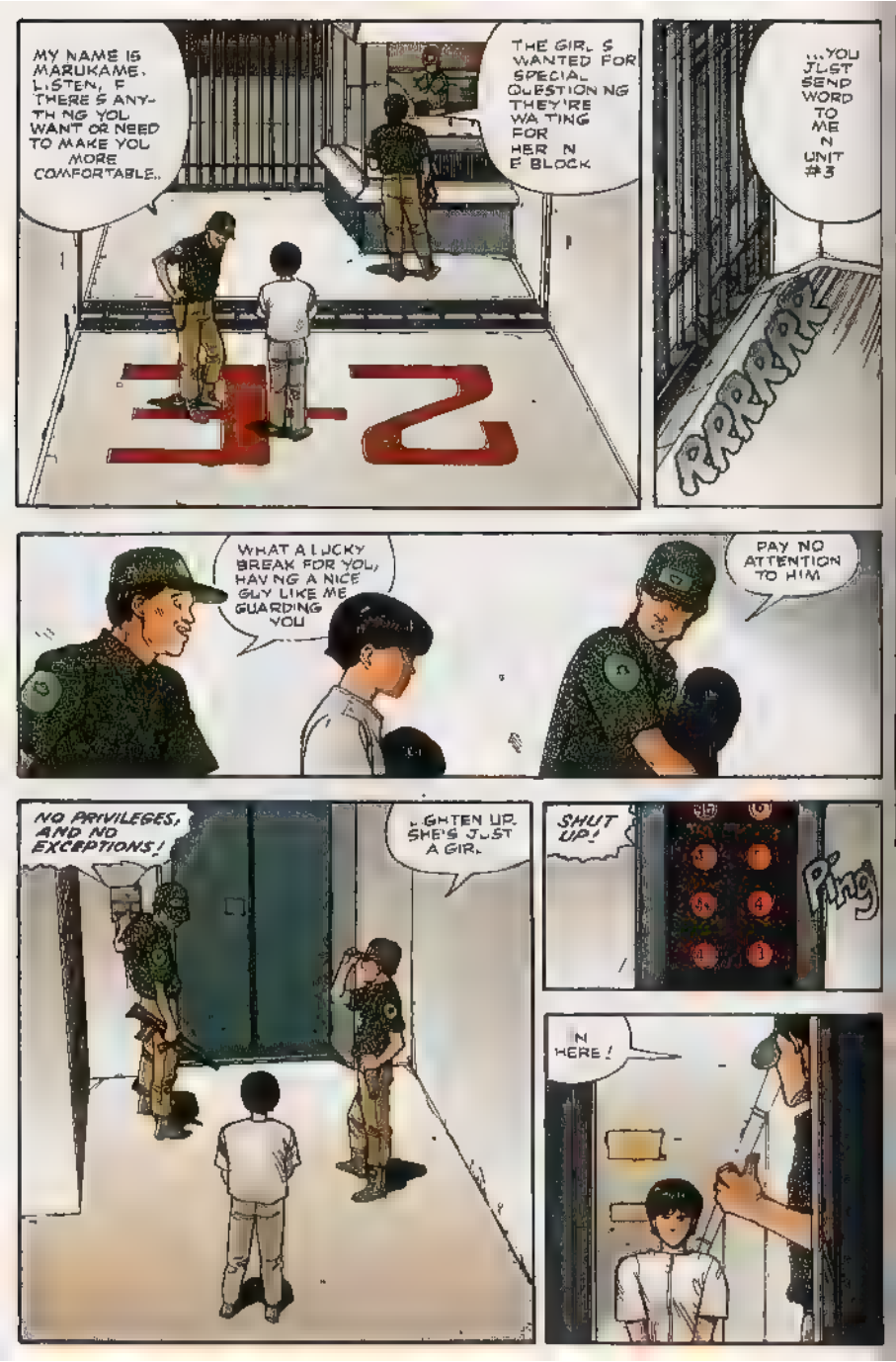
PLEASE ACCEPT MY APOLOGIES, LADY MIYAKO. WHY DID YOU SUMMON ME?
AH... NEZU... LITTLE RODENT...
I WANTED TO TELL YOU OF WHAT I HAVE DREAMED.
CHK

AND WHAT... WHAT'S THAT?
I DREAMED OF DISASTER.
WHAT... SORT OF DISASTER?
CATASTROPHE. ONE THAT WILL ALTER THE FACE OF THE WORLD
AND NO ONE... NONE OF US...
... HAS THE POWER TO PREVENT IT


IS THE NAME OF THIS DISASTER ...AKIRA?
IT IS A DESTINY WHICH CANNOT BE AVERTED.
AKIRA IS A PAWN, AS ARE WE ALL.
THE DAY OF HIS AWAKENING DRAWS EVER CLOSER. ALREADY, EVENTS HAVE BEEN SET IN MOTION.
FOR YOU-- FOR YOUR ENTIRE PEOPLE'S PARTY-- THIS WILL BE THE TURNING POINT. IT MUST NOT CATCH YOU UNAWARES.

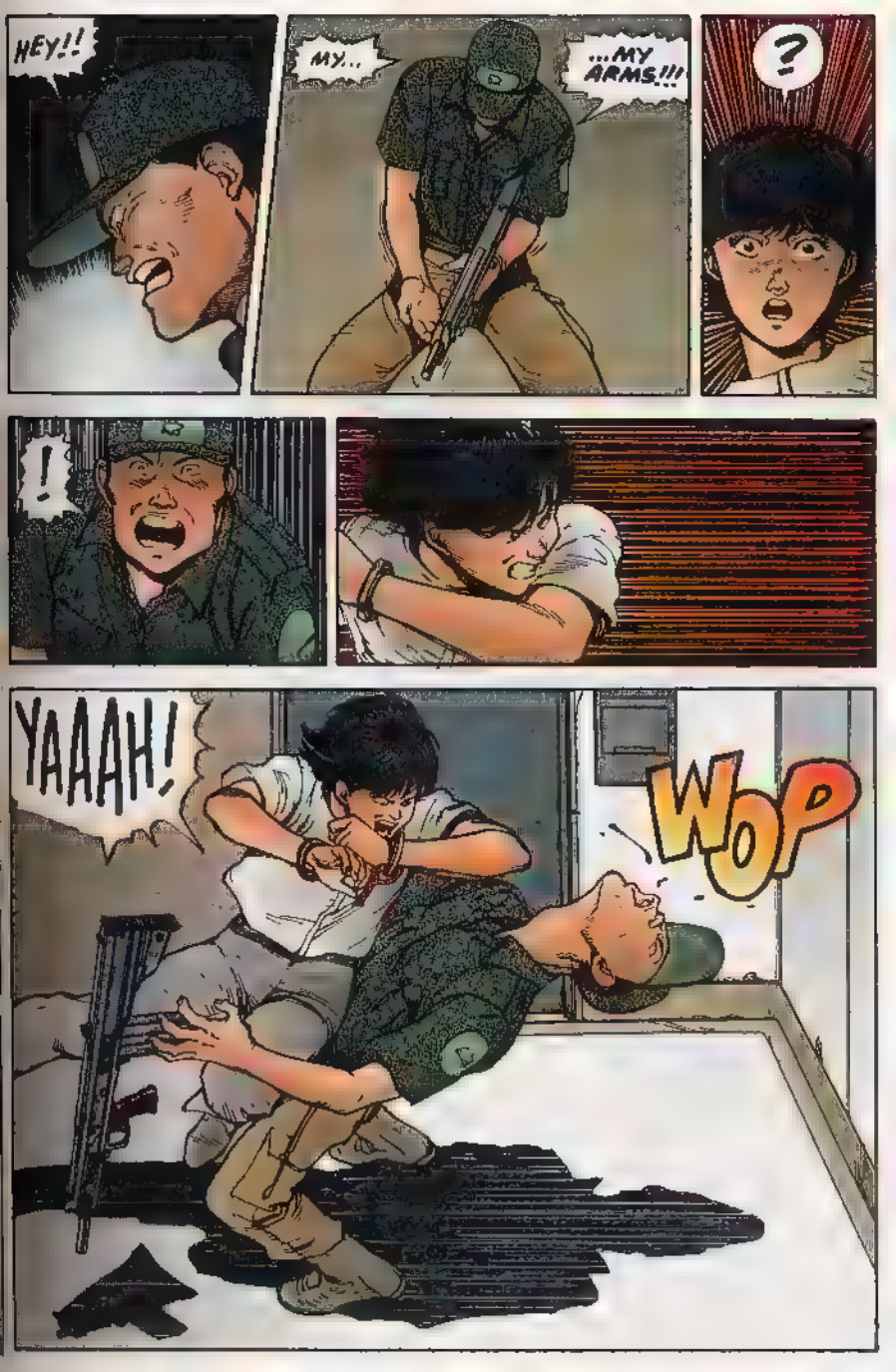
KIK
GET OUT HERE!
WHAT A CUTE PRISONER. WHAT'S YOUR NAME, HONEY?
NOW, MOVE IT!
COME ON, GIRLIE THEY WANT TO QUESTION YOU.
GEE!

POOR YAMAGATA...
COME ON... LET'S BE FRIENDS. I COULD MAKE YOUR STAY HERE A LOT NICER..
STOP IT, YOU FOOL!
I COULD GET YOU A MAGAZINE... OR SOME CANDY. WOULD YOU LIKE THAT?
KNOCK IT OFF!
AW, I WAS JUST JOKING. SOME PEOPLE SHOULD LEARN TO TAKE A JOKE, SHOULDN'T THEY, HONEY?
LIFE'S MORE FUN WHEN YOU KNOW HOW TO ENJOY YOURSELF!


MY NAME IS MARUKAME. L.STEN, F THERE S ANY-TH NG YOL WANT OR NEED TO MAKE YOL MORE COMFORTABLE..
THE GIRL S WANTED FOR SPECIAL QUESTION NG THEY'RE WA TING FOR HER N E BLOCK
...YOU JLST SEND WORD TO ME N UNIT #3
AAAAAAAA
WHAT A LJCKY BREAK FOR YOL, HAV NG A NICE GLY LIKE ME GUARDING YOU
PAY NO ATTENTION TO HIM
NO PRIVILEGES, AND NO EXCEPTIONS!
L GHTEN UP. SHE'S JUST A GIRL
SHUT UP!
Ping
N HERE!

Tap
!
POP
HUNH--?!
WHOOSH
WHAT THE--?!

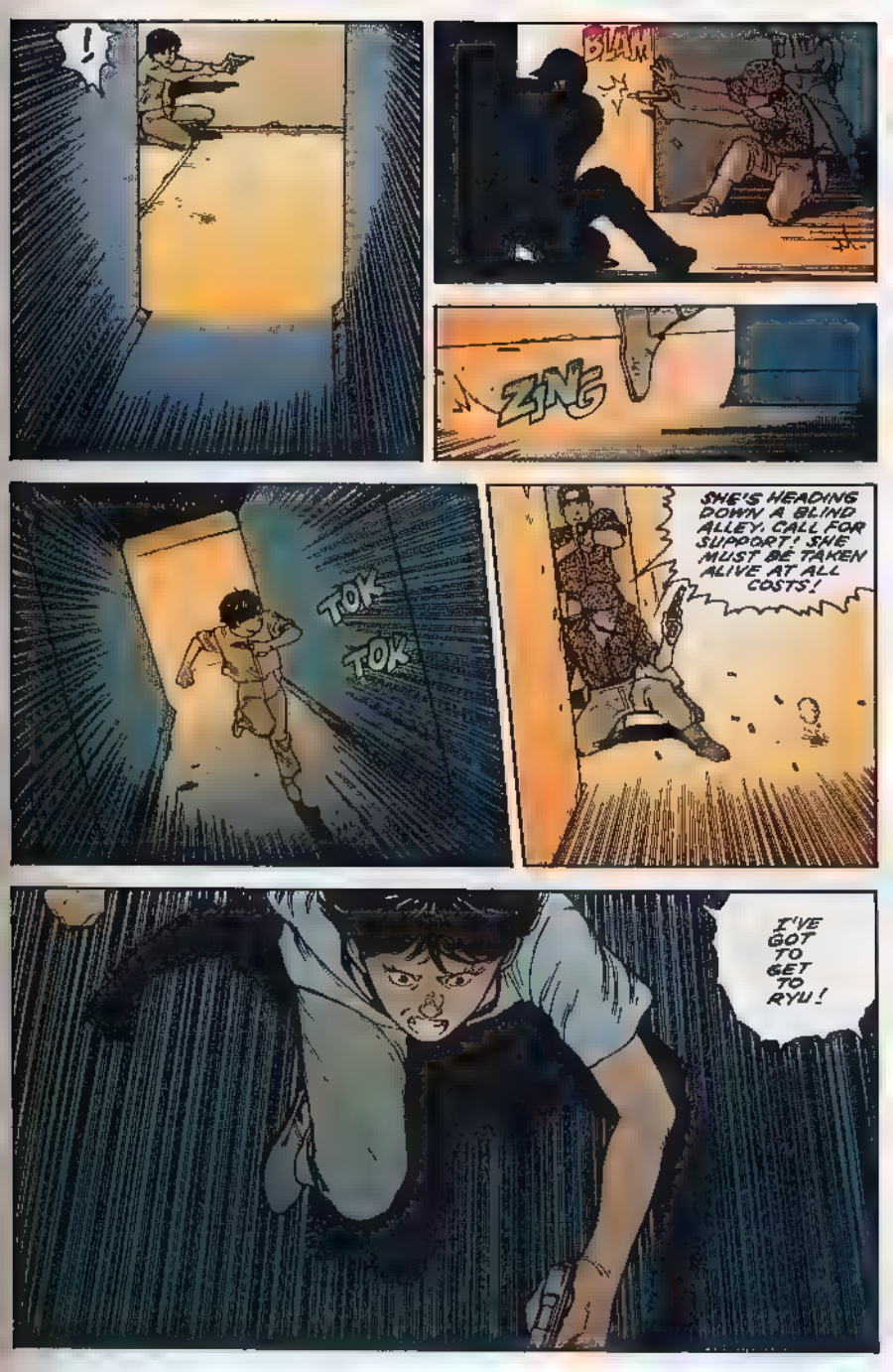
THUNK
!
OW!
THOK
YOU BITCH!
HEY!
FREEZE!
SWOOSH
WAIT FOR ME!!


HEY!!
MY...
...MY ARMS!!!
?
!
YAAAH!
WOP

HERE WE SEE A MAN AND A CHILD.
YOU MUST DECIDE WHAT THE MAN WISHES TO DO WITH THE CHILD.
ONE-- WILL THEY PLAY BALL?
TWO--?
THREE-- HIT EACH OTHER ON THE HEAD?
AND BREAK THEIR NECKS
FOUR-- KICK...?
HERE WE SEE A CHILD PLAYING WITH WOODEN BLOCKS.
SMASH THEM
HE HAS A TRIANGULAR BLOCK, AND.
THE QUESTION IS..
AAOOOOOO
?!

AAAOOOOOOOO
WHAT'S GOING ON?!

rattle
TOK
TOK
TOK
TOK
klink
TOKKA TOKKA TOKKA TOKKA TOKKA
:GASP:
OH--!
OOF--!
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM


!
BLAM
ZNG
TOK
TOK
SHE'S HEADING DOWN A BLIND ALLEY! CALL FOR SUPPORT! SHE MUST BE TAKEN ALIVE AT ALL COSTS!
I'VE GOT TO GET TO RYU!

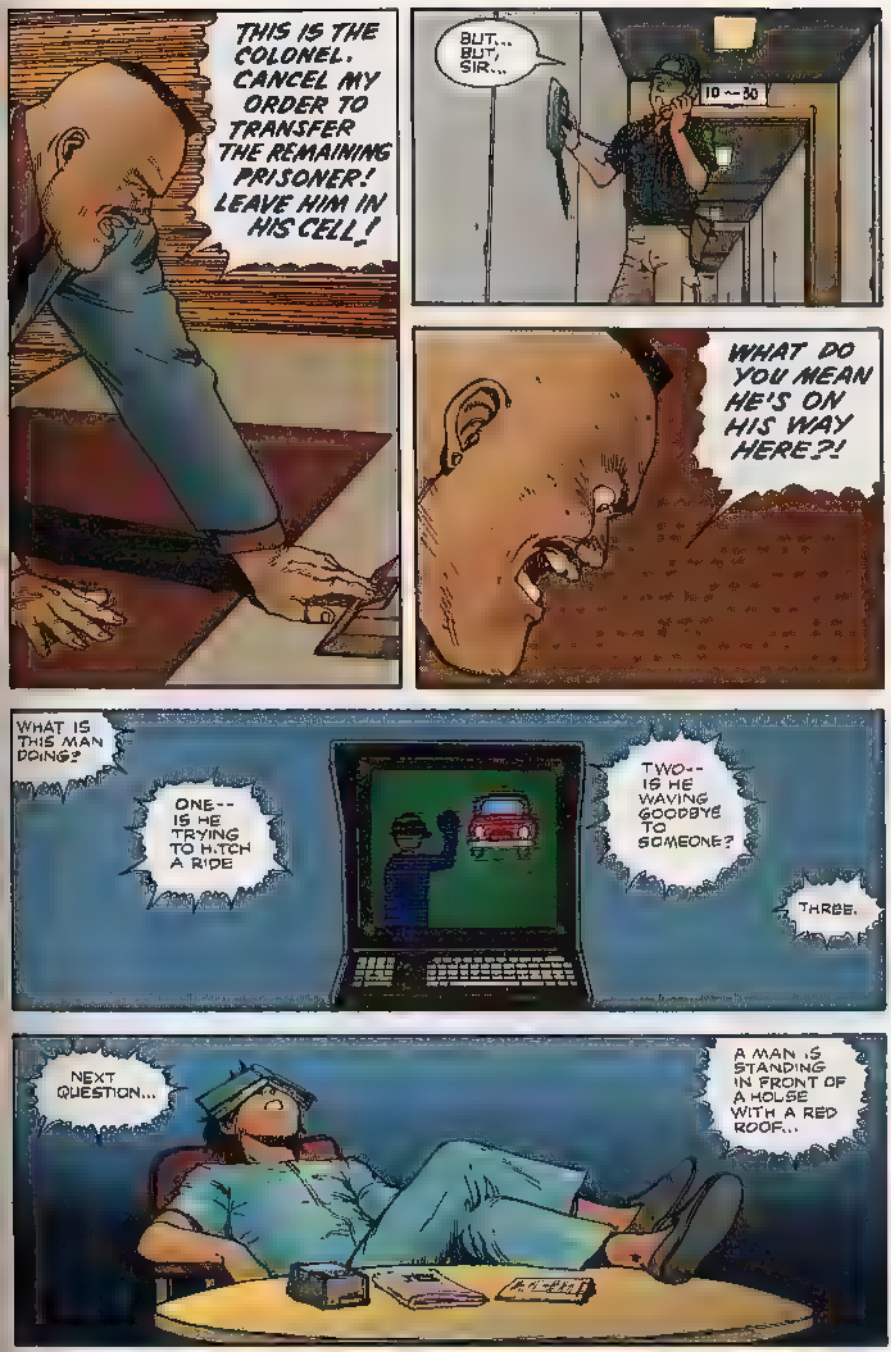
DID YOU BRING PROTECTIVE GEAR?
YOU BET I DID.
THAT'S NO ORDINARY GIRL!
..
P
A DEAD END ...
THERE SHE IS!!
PROCEED WITH CAUTION!
DON'T TAKE CHANCES!

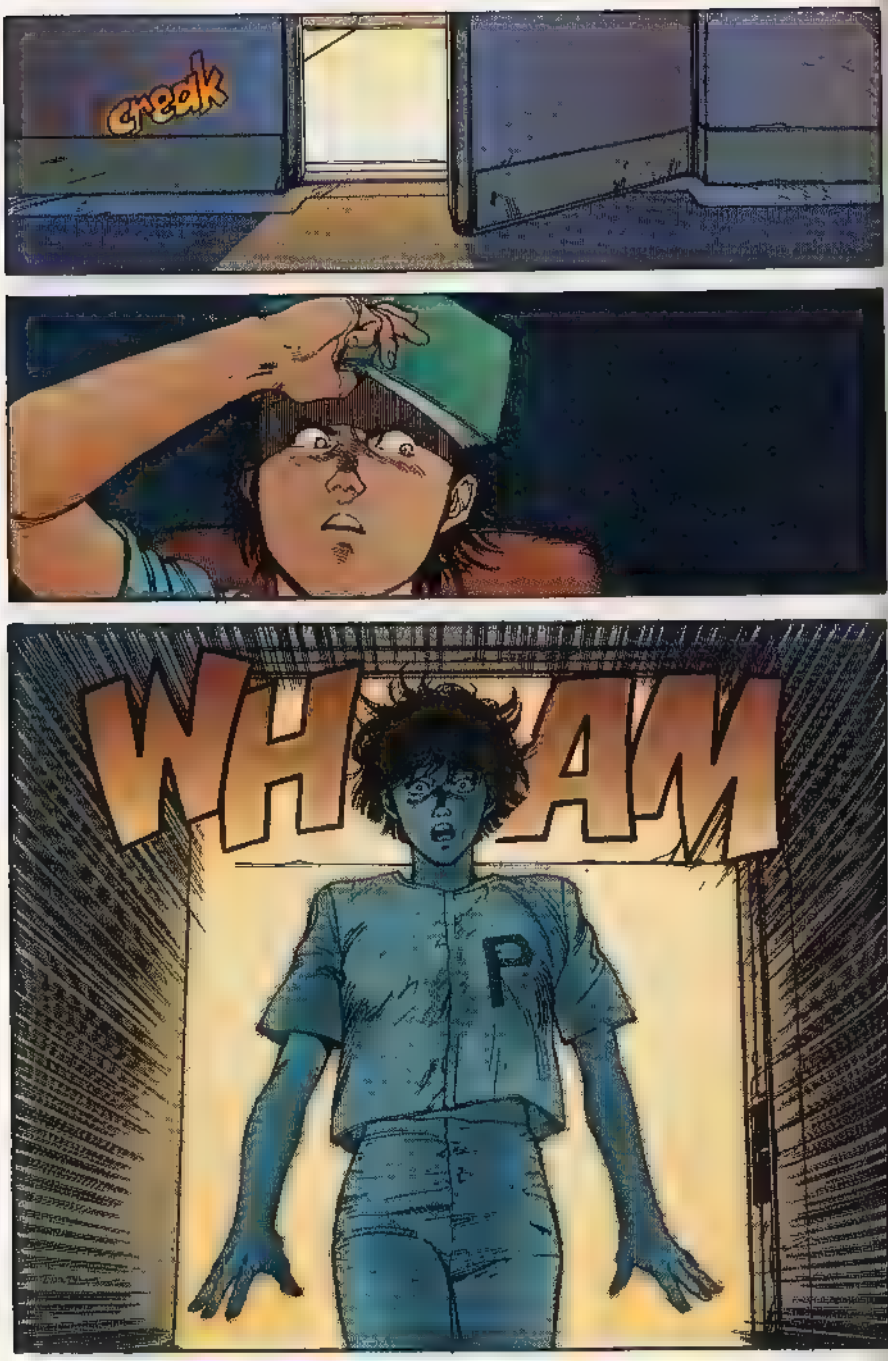
CHAAARGE!!
THUP
!
?
WHAT IN...?
WHERE DID SHE --?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN SHE DISAPPEARED?!
WE..WE ONLY LOST SIGHT OF HER FOR AN INSTANT SIR.
SHE WAS DEAD AHEAD OF US.. TRAPPED...
BAM
BLITHERING NINCOMPOOPS!
WE'RE VERY SORRY, SIR!!
NOT EVEN A COCKROACH CAN MOVE HERE UNDETECTED. THE GIRL MUST BE SOMEWHERE.
NOW GO AND FIND HER!!!
YESSIR!!

WHERE AM I...?

THEY'RE STILL CHECKING, SIR, BUT SO FAR THERE'S BEEN NO SIGN OF HER.
YOUR OPINION . ?
WITHOUT PROPER TESTS THERE'S NO POINT IN EVEN SPECULATING ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT SHE HAS THE POWER.
BUT, IF I MIGHT SUGGEST... DIDN'T YOU SAY SOMETHING ABOUT A BOY WHO WAS BROUGHT IN WITH HER...?
I'VE ALREADY ORDERED HIM BROUGHT HERE.
!
DAMN!!


THIS IS THE COLONEL. CANCEL MY ORDER TO TRANSFER THE REMAINING PRISONER! LEAVE HIM IN HIS CELL!
BUT... BUT, SIR...
10 -- 30
WHAT DO YOU MEAN HE'S ON HIS WAY HERE?!
WHAT IS THIS MAN DOING?
ONE-- IS HE TRYING TO HITCH A RIDE
TWO-- IS HE WAVING GOODBYE TO SOMEONE?
THREE.
NEXT QUESTION...
A MAN IS STANDING IN FRONT OF A HOUSE WITH A RED ROOF...


creak
WHAM

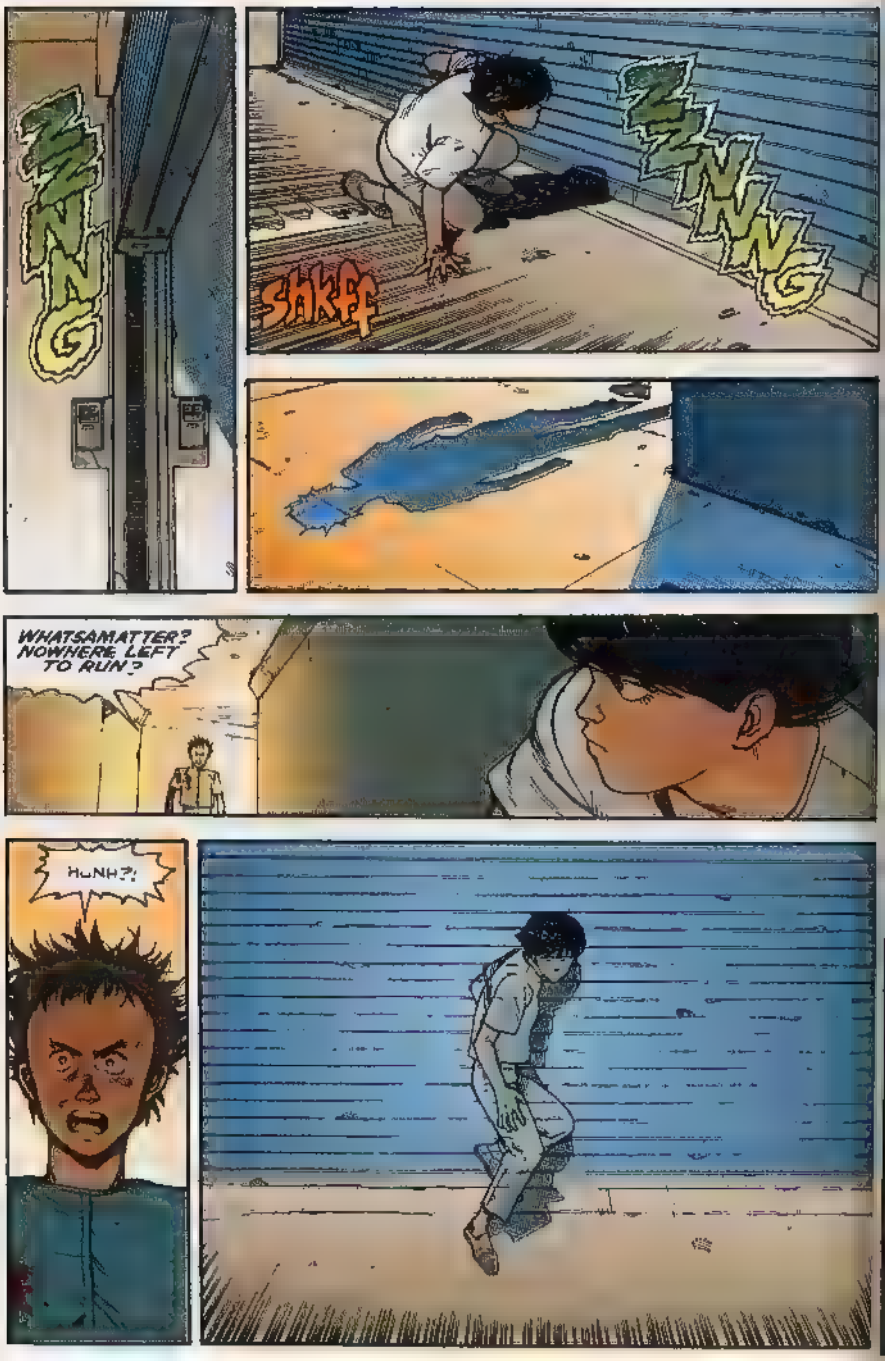
HUNH?
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WAS WITH KANEDA-- HIS NEW LITTLE FRIEND.
?
ZAAA

SSHHH
BLAM
BLAM
!
AUGH!
WHAK
KRASH
BLAM
BLAM
!

OO...
OOH...
YOU'RE HISTORY!
SWOOSH
NNNGGG
!

NOOOOO!
FWOOM
NO!!
KRUSH

DAMN HER.
thud
swish
YOU'RE MINE!!! YOU GOT THAT?
!
thak
vrrrt
kpow
kpow
tok
tok
tok
tok
RUN. IT WON'T HELP.


ZZNNG
ZZNNNG
SHKFF
WHATSAMATTER? NOWHERE LEFT TO RUN?
HUNH?!

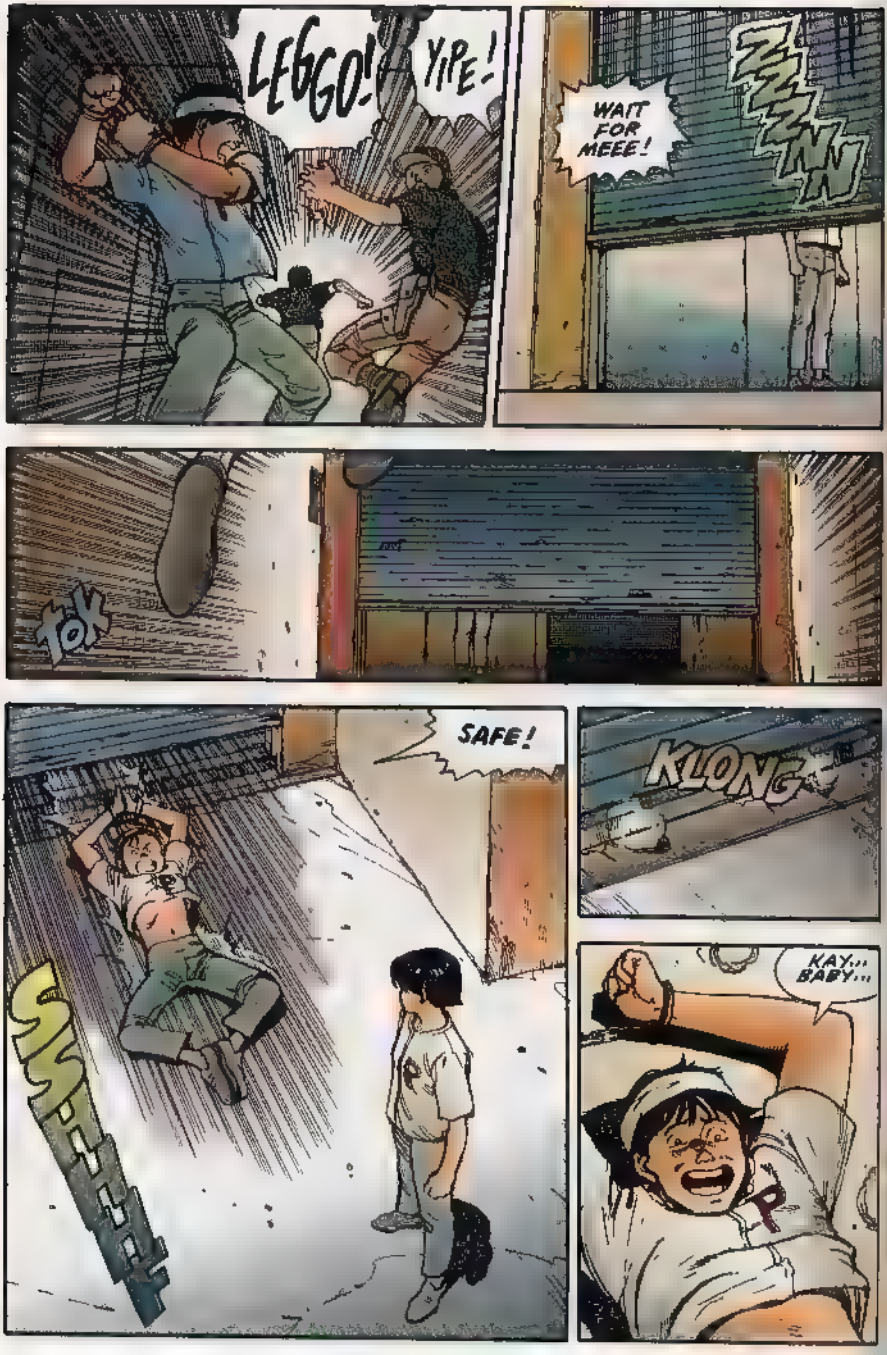
BANG
VRRT
HOW DID SHE...?

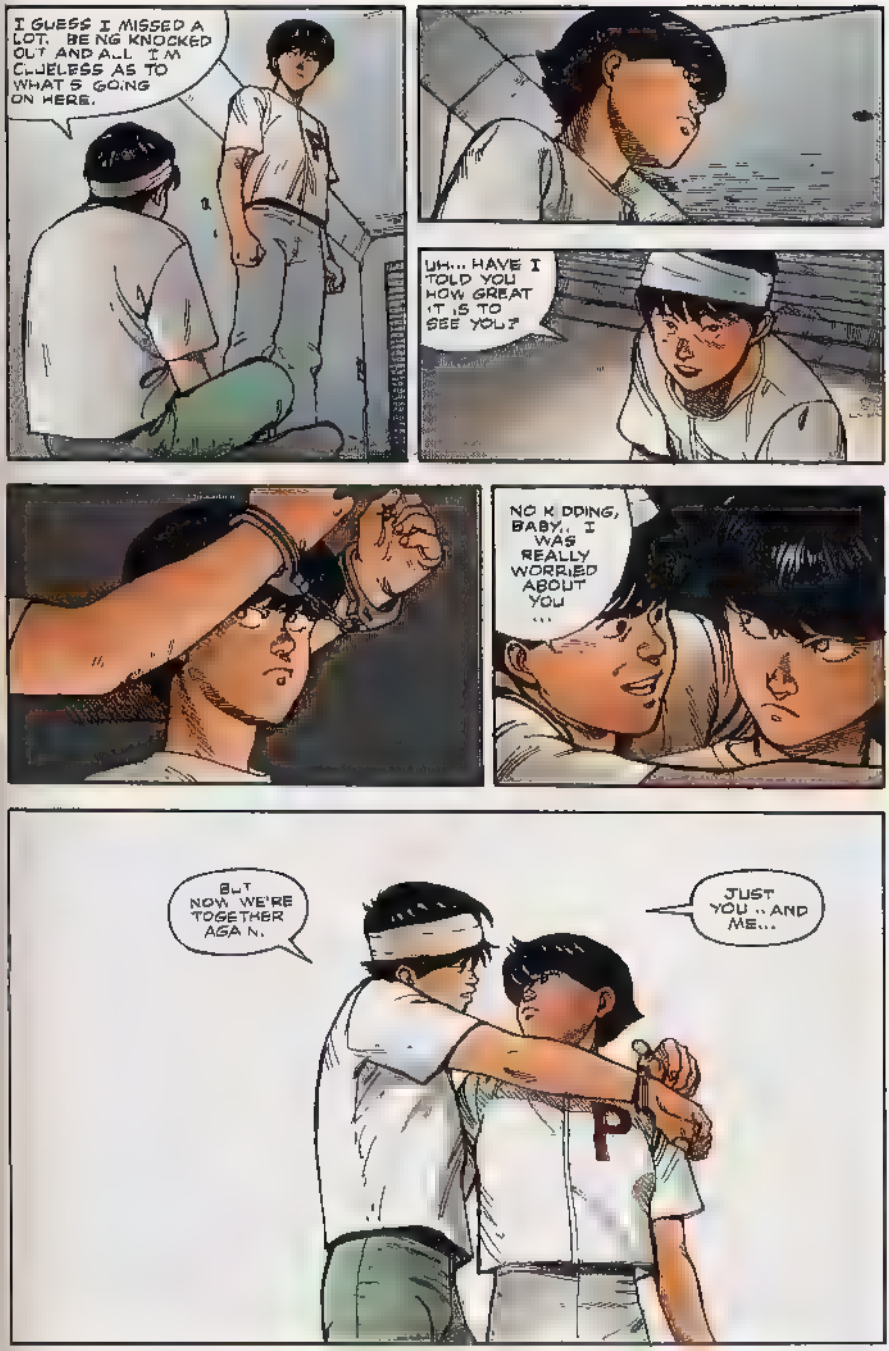
COME BACK HERE!!
KRUNK
YIII--!
?
SHE...SHE TELEPORTED ...?

TROMP TROMP TROMP TROMP
MOVE IT!!
THEY'RE WEARING PROTECTIVE GEAR
YOU GUYS ALWAYS GET THIS MUCH TRAFFIC THROUGH HERE?
SHUT UP!
IS THERE ANYWHERE AROUND HERE A GUY COULD TAKE A LEAK?
I SAID SHUT UP!!
NO KIDDING, I DON'T THINK I CAN HOLD IT MUCH LONGER!
CONTROL YOURSELF OR YOU CLEAN IT UP!
HUNH?!
!

BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
Thud
BLAM
:UUGHH:
FIRE!..
BLAM
FIRE!
BLAM BLAM
THE BULLETS ARE HAVING NO EFFECT!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
YAAA!
WHAT'S GOING ON?
RUN!
WHAT..?!

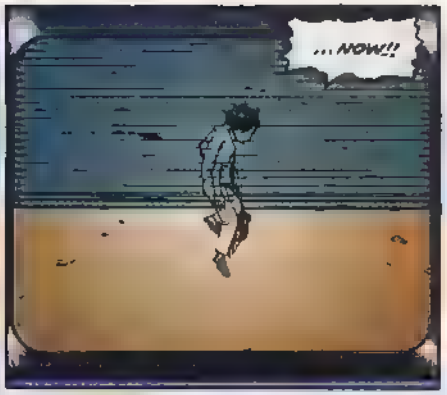
KAY!!
RADIO FOR BACKUP!
THESE GUNS ARE USELESS!!
WE HAVEN'T HIT HER ONCE!!
BLAM
KAY!! IT'S MEEE!
COME ON!!
LOWER THE FIRE DOORS! WE'LL BOX HER IN!
CLEAR THE AREA! THEY'RE COMING DOWN NOW!
ZZNNN
KAYY!!


LEGGO!
YIPE!
WAIT FOR MEEE!
ZZZNN
TOK
SAFE!
SWIPE
KLONG
KAY... BABY...


I GUESS I MISSED A LOT. BEING KNOCKED OUT AND ALL I'M CLUELESS AS TO WHAT'S GOING ON HERE.
UH... HAVE I TOLD YOU HOW GREAT IT IS TO SEE YOU?
NO KIDDING, BABY... I WAS REALLY WORRIED ABOUT YOU ...
BUT NOW WE'RE TOGETHER AGAIN.
JUST YOU ..AND ME...

?
!
WHA-WHA-WHA-WHA--
--WHAT DID YOU DO?! WHERE ARE WE?!

HERE IT COMES...


...NOW!!

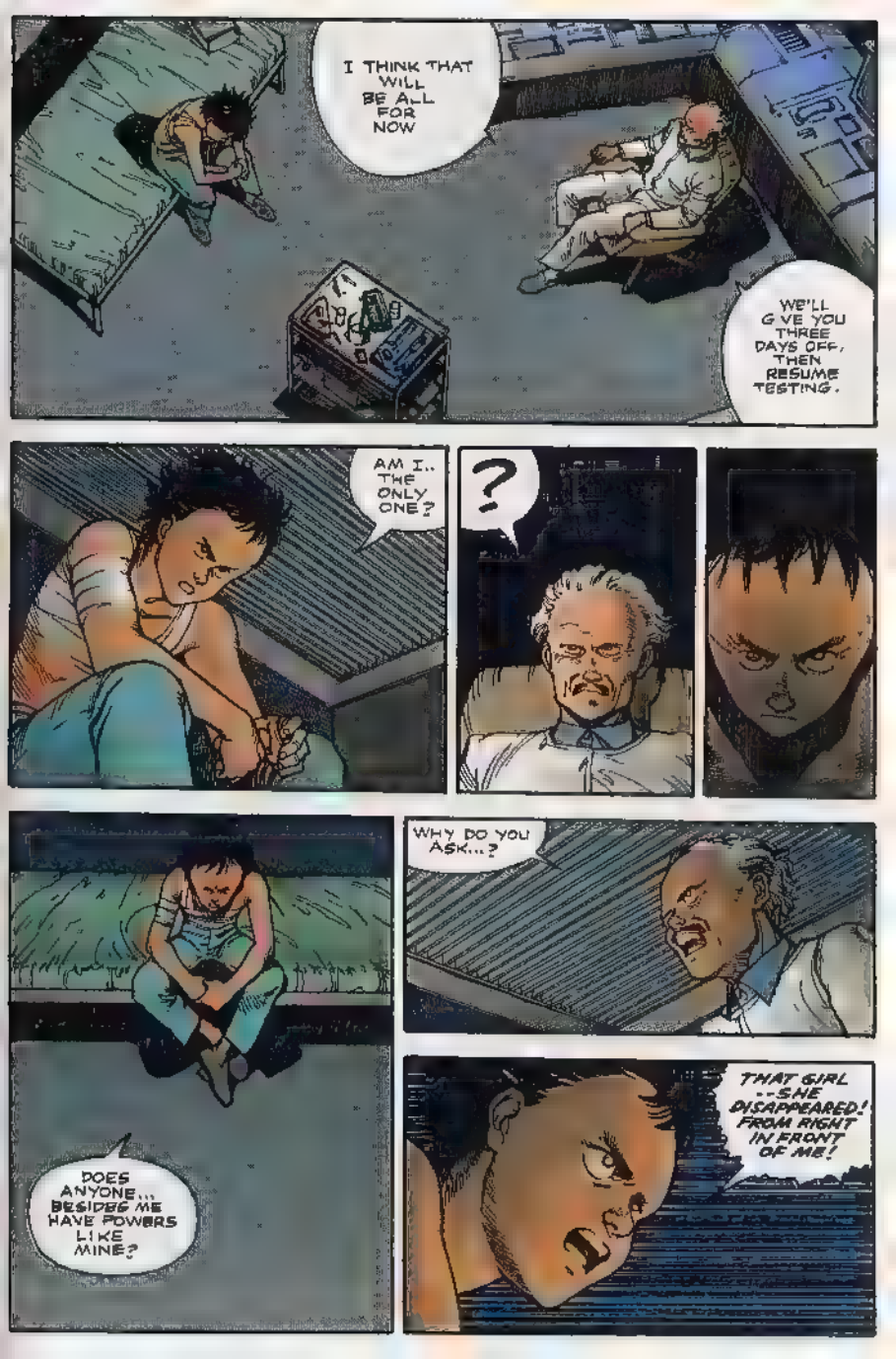
TE-TELEPORTATION--?!
I... DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.

HMMM.
RUN THE TAPE AGAIN
TOTAL INSTAN-TANEOUS MATTER TRANS-FER..

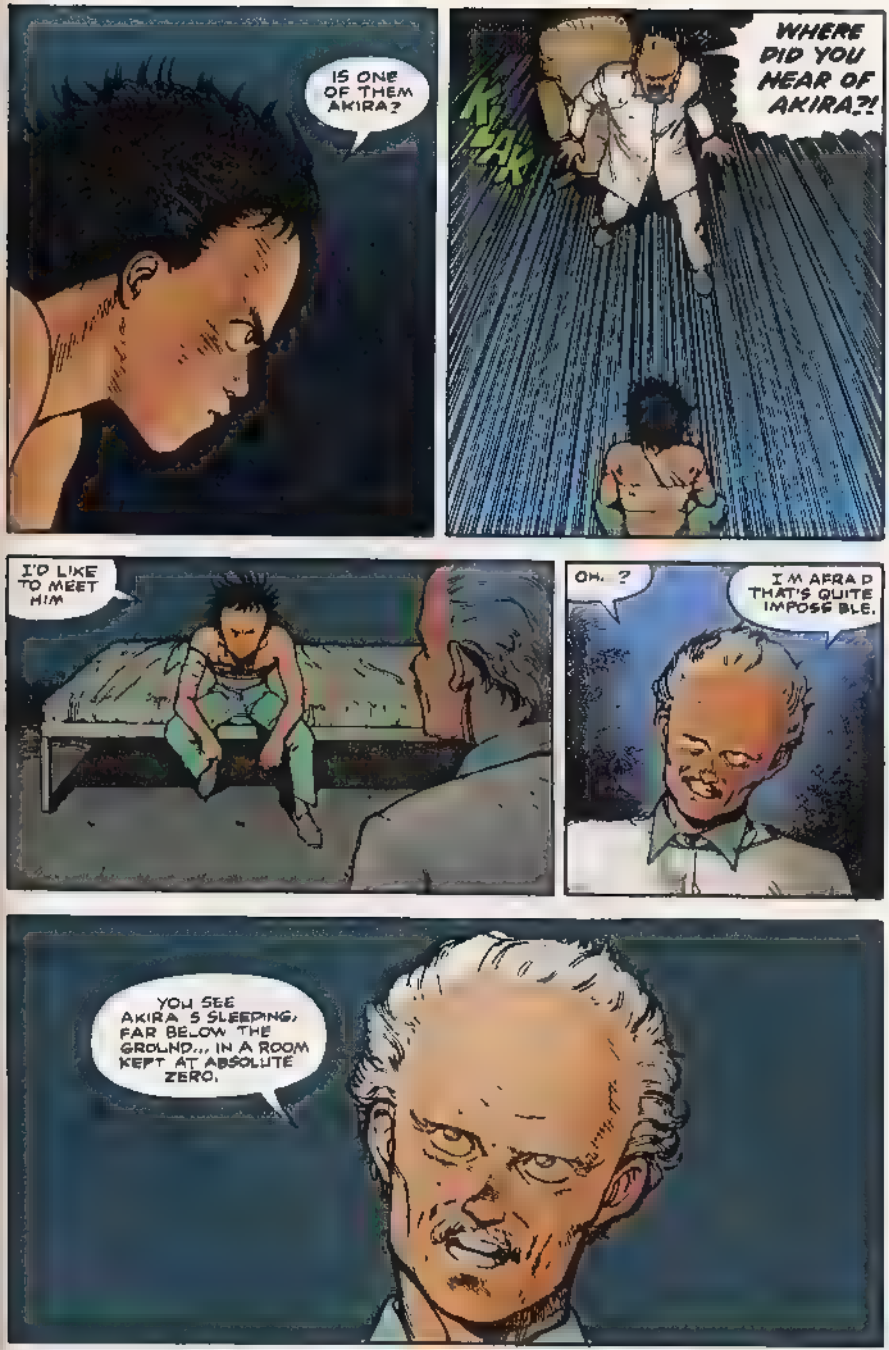
...

A CLASSIC D-15 STYLE TELEPORTER, EXHIBITING THE SAME ABILITY AS NUMBER 28.
I DISAGREE SHE IS CLEARLY A C-20 STYLE..

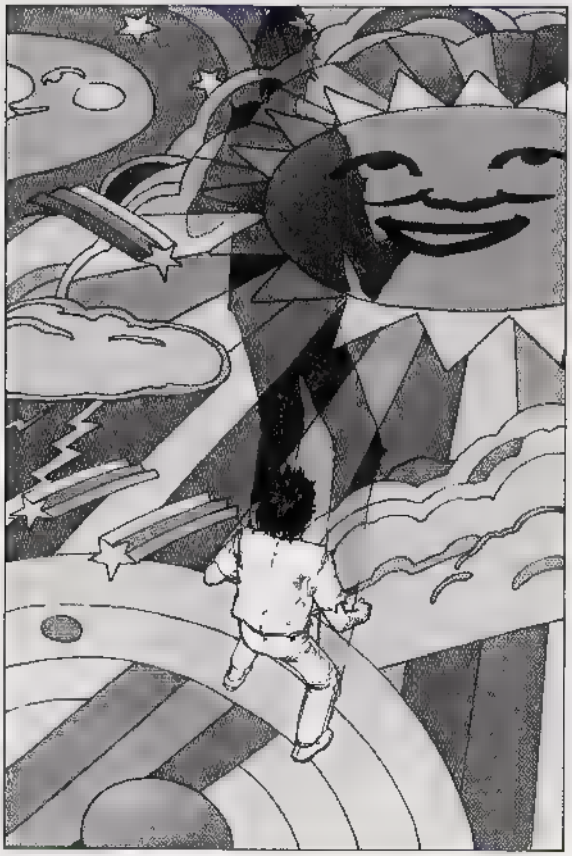
BEEP
DOCTOR?
YES COLONEL?
WHAT'S NUMBER 41'S CONDITION?
HIS BULLET WOUND HAS HEALED WITHOUT A TRACE.
AND ALTHOUGH HE HAS JUST UNDERWENT A SEVERE PSYCHIC TRAUMA...
...HE HAS ALREADY FULLY RECOVERED.
HE'S UNBELIEVABLE!
WHEN YOU'RE THROUGH THERE, COME TO MY OFFICE. THERE'S A TAPE I WANT YOU TO SEE
VERY GOOD, SIR. IN HALF AN HOUR.
I'LL BE WAITING.


I THINK THAT WILL BE ALL FOR NOW
WE'LL GIVE YOU THREE DAYS OFF, THEN RESUME TESTING.
AM I.. THE ONLY ONE?
?
DOES ANYONE... BESIDES ME HAVE POWERS LIKE MINE?
WHY DO YOU ASK...?
THAT GIRL --SHE DISAPPEARED! FROM RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME!

...
COULD I LEARN TO DO THAT?
WE-E-ELL...
THAT MEANS NO, DOESN'T IT?!
THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE IN THE WORLD. WITH ALL KINDS OF DIFFERENT TALENTS SOME ARE ATHLETES AND SOME ARTISTS FOR EXAMPLE
BUT SOME JOCKS ARE ARTISTS TOO!
BUT VERY FEW TALENTS IS RARE.. AND COMBINATIONS OF TALENT ARE EVEN MORE RARE..
I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE, AM I?
THERE ARE... A FEW OTHERS.


IS ONE OF THEM AKIRA?
KLAK
WHERE DID YOU HEAR OF AKIRA?!
I'D LIKE TO MEET HIM
OH..?
I'M AFRAID THAT'S QUITE IMPOSSIBLE.
YOU SEE AKIRA'S SLEEPING, FAR BELOW THE GROUND... IN A ROOM KEPT AT ABSOLUTE ZERO.

NEXT ISSUE: **WEAPON OF VENGEANCE**



OTOMO GALLERY

Last issue we presented for the first time in these pages examples of the special artwork created by Katsuhiro Otomo as title pages for the serialized segments of *Akira* which appear in *Young Magazine*, the popular comics anthology from Kodansha, Ltd.

H[illegible] first began publication in Tokyo.

Along with providing a good look at how Mr. Otomo's finely-shaded and detailed art appears in black and white prior to the computerized color separation done for our edition by Steve Oliff (with *Akira* creator Otomo's approval and consultation), the material offers a tantalizing glimpse of scenes and characters (such as Chiyoko, pictured above), that will be coming your way in the months ahead.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO
writer/illustrator

YASUMITSU SUETAKE
chief assistant to Mr. Otomo

MAKOTO SHIOSAKI
SATOSHI TAKABATAKE
assistants to Mr. Otomo

HIROSHI HIRATA
designer, AKIRA cartograph

AKIRA SAITO
designer, Kodansha edition

Kodansha Ltd.

YOKO UMEZAWA
with LINDA M. YORK
translation

KOICHI YURI
editor, Kodansha edition

NORIYUKI OKAZAKI
YUKA ANDO
editorial coordinators

Epic Comics:

JO DUFFY
english adaptation

STEVE OLIFF
colorist

MICHAEL HIGGINS
letterer

HARRY CANDELARIO
ED MAGALONG
production

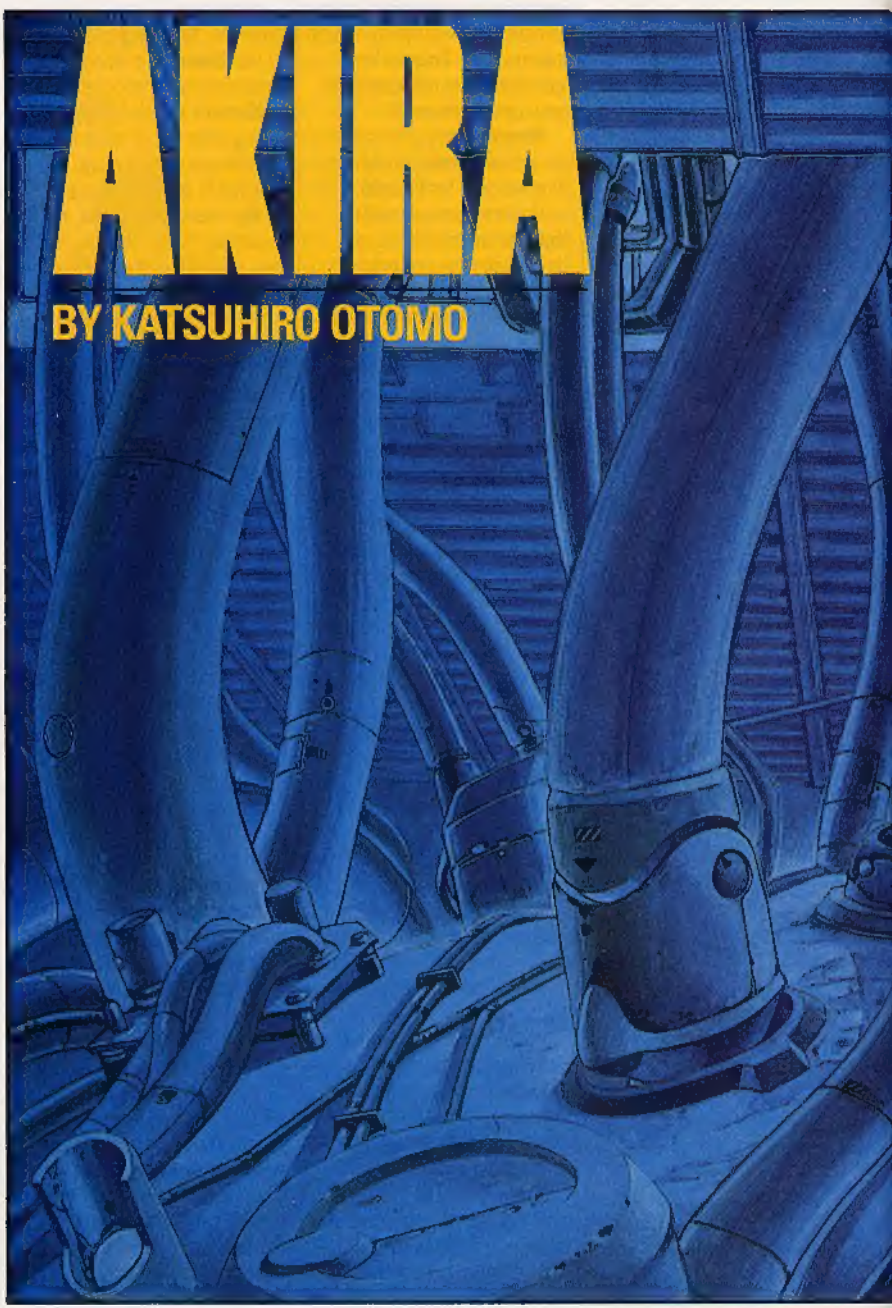
ANDREW WYATT
editorial assistant, Epic edition

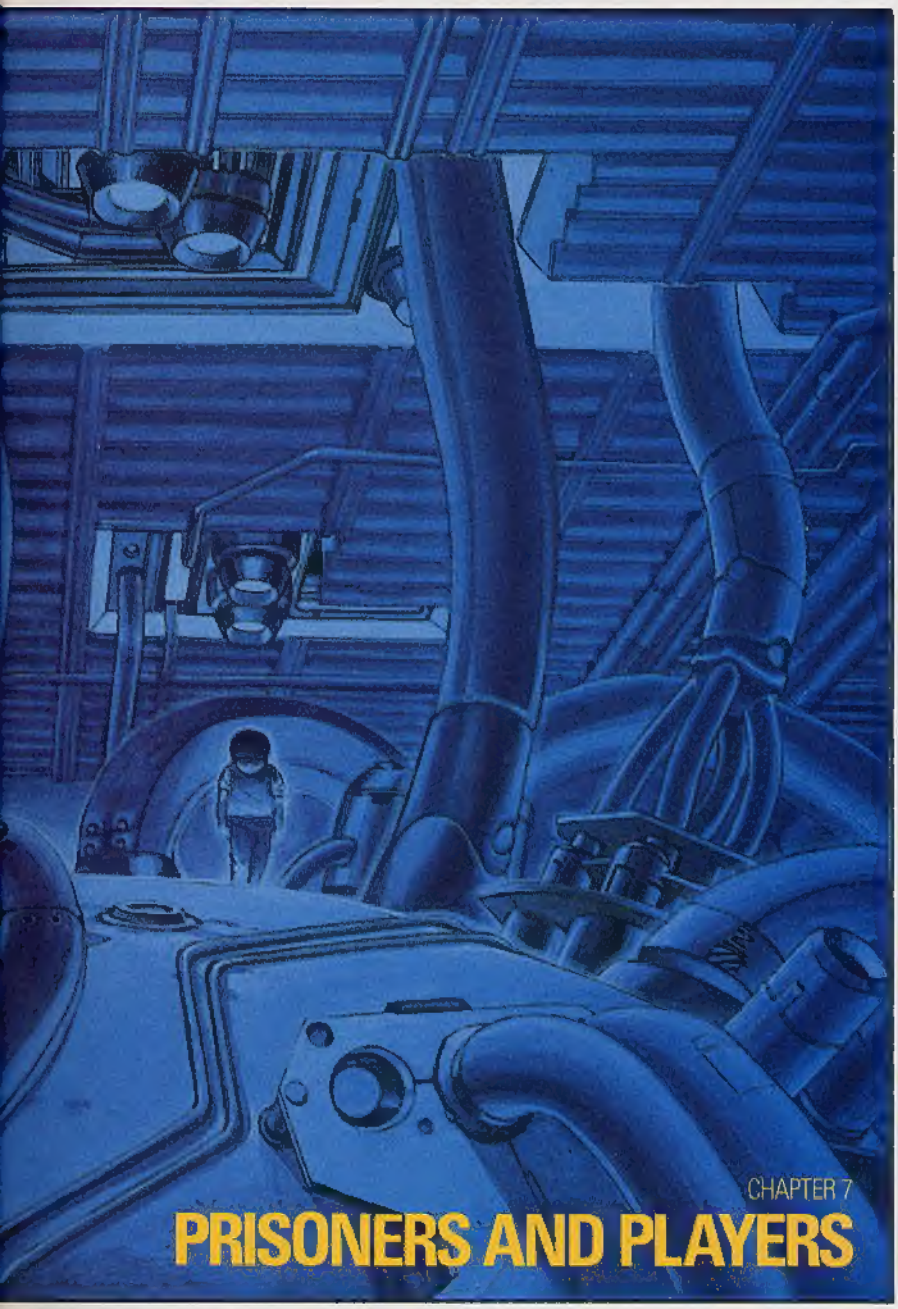
ARCHIE GOODWIN
editor, Epic edition

Within one of 21st Century Neo-Tokyo's great city towers is a secret government project. Here, a volatile group of individuals is gathered. Most volatile of all is Tetsuo, haunted delinquent with murderous psychic power. The project's head, the Colonel, hopes Tetsuo can be used to counter an even greater threat... the as yet slumbering paranormal giant AKIRA. But three mutant children in the project sense impending doom in Tetsuo's presence. And two captives there—the anti-government agent, Kay, and Tetsuo's former friend, Kaneda—would do anything to see Tetsuo never unleashes his power again. All of these individuals are prisoners in a deadly chain of events, players in a mounting game of earth-shattering consequence.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

0 24885 23068 0 07

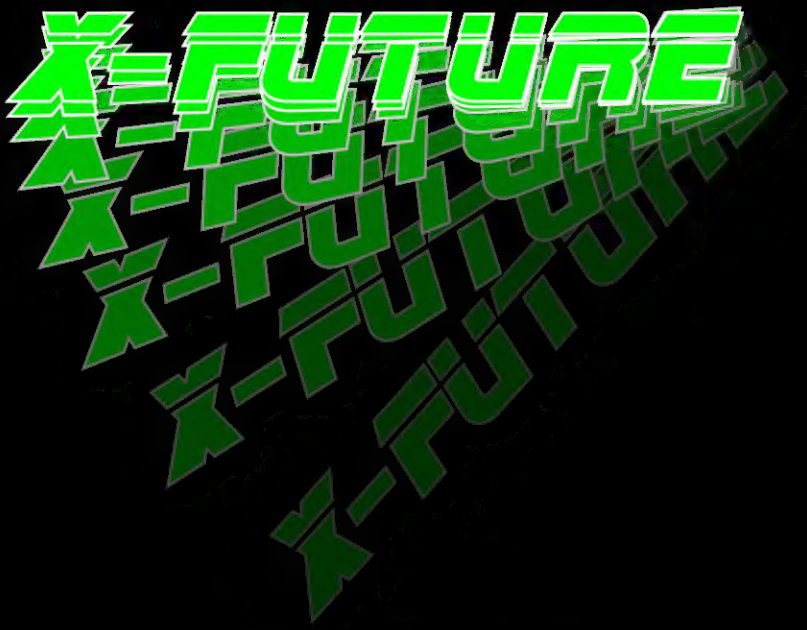

AKIRA
BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO



CHAPTER 7

PRISONERS AND PLAYERS

This scan produced by:



I love um

I buy um

I preserve um